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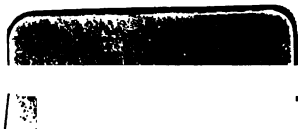
HISTORY OF FRANCE

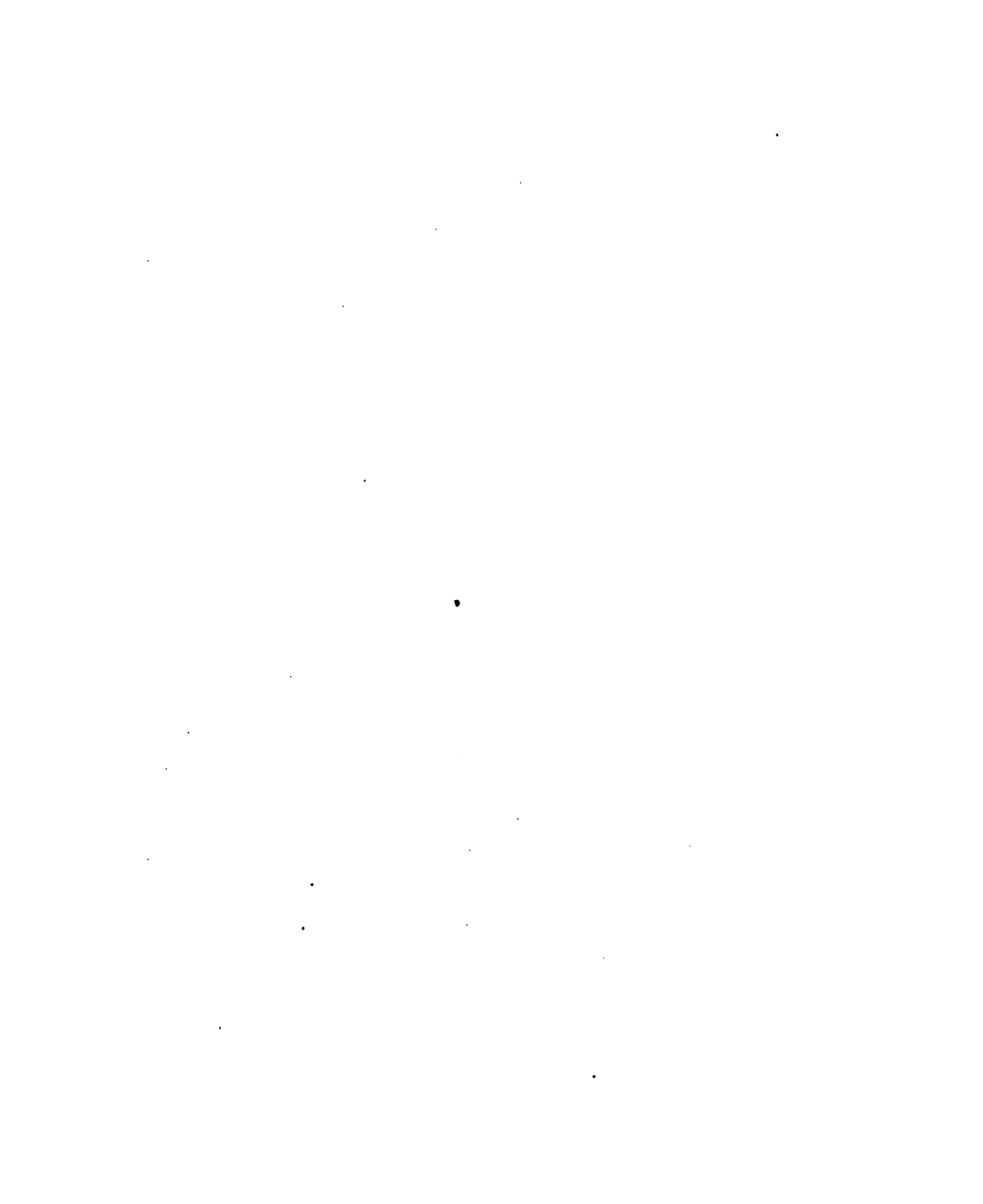


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HISTORY OF FRANCE

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A

HISTORY OF FRANCE

ADAPTED FROM THE FRENCH

FOR THE USE OF ENGLISH CHILDREN

BY

EMMA MARSHALL

AUTHOR OF "LIFE'S AFTERMATH," ETC.

WITH TWENTY-SIX ILLUSTRATIONS



SEELEY, JACKSON, & HALLIDAY, 54, FLEET STREET
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PREFACE.

IN the easy histories of England which we put into the hands of children as soon as they can read, frequent reference is naturally made to contemporary events in France, and to men and women living in that country in the time of our Plantagenet, Tudor, and Stuart sovereigns. So close, indeed, has been the connection between France and England, that a child cannot realize it too soon, and it is hoped that this little history, adapted from the French, may supply a want which has been felt—not of many admirable histories for older students—but of one sufficiently simple to arrest the attention of a child, awaken interest, and fix the events recorded on the memory.

This history, so far as the narrative is concerned, is partially founded on that of M. Lamé Fleury, which in its original language has been found for the last thirty years to have the power of interesting young readers. The latter part of the book, from the Reformation to the present time, has been re-written, a concluding chapter added, and the whole carefully revised, by an able and experienced scholar, and while I gratefully acknowledge my obligation to him, I feel more confidence in sending forth this little book for the use of English children.

GLOUCESTER,

Christmas, 1876.

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HISTORY OF FRANCE.

CHAPTER I.

GAUL AND ITS INHABITANTS.

From B.C. 50 to A.D. 406.

THE conquest of Gaul by Julius Cæsar is amongst the most important events recorded in Roman history. This conquest placed under the dominion of Rome the large provinces which are now included in the country we know as France, and the resistance made to it may be considered as the beginning of a long period of conflicts, the story of which is full of interest and variety.

But before we speak of the celebrated men to whom France has given birth, we must try to get a clear idea, on the map, of the principal rivers, the chains of mountains, and the most important cities of this great country, and then we shall be better able to understand the events of which it has been the theatre.

In ages long past, the name of Gaul was given to the whole of the countries lying between the Rhine, the Atlantic Ocean, the Mediterranean and the Alps and Pyrenees. This territory included many provinces which are now no longer part of France;

and is watered by many rivers, to which we must give particular attention.

First amongst these rivers is the Rhine, which flows to the north-east of Gaul, and separates it from Germany. This is one of the most rapid rivers in Europe ; and is so often mentioned in the early times of history, that you must study its course with great care and attention.

Not far from the Rhine, you will find upon the map, the Meuse, a large river flowing from the south to the north and emptying itself into the ocean. Formerly the whole course of this river was included within Gaul itself, and on more than one account it deserves especial notice, although in our times a part of the country through which it flows belongs to the modern kingdom of Belgium.

Next, as we come down from the north to the south, we find the noble river Seine, on which Paris is seated, and whose banks are covered with innumerable towns, villages and country seats. The same may be said of the Loire, whose course is even longer than that of the Seine, as it runs through the greater part of France and divides it into two nearly equal parts.

The Romans gave the name of Aquitania to all that part of Gaul which lay between the sea and the Pyrenees. As it retained the same name for a very long time, you must try to remember its situation on the map.

The river Loire rises in the range of lofty mountains situated in the south of France, and is at first scarcely more than a little brook over which a man could easily jump ; but as it flows onward, it receives a great many tributary streams, and at last is transformed into a large river, bearing stately ships upon its breast, as it draws nearer and nearer to the western coast where it mingles at last with the ocean.

France is a country of many rivers, and though it is not necessary to enumerate them all, it is very important that you should

remember the names of the Rhone and the Saône, which, after rising in the mountains lying towards the east of France, unite at last in one majestic stream, which pursues its course towards the blue waters of the Mediterranean Sea ; Lyons, one of the oldest commercial cities of France, being situated just at the junction of the two rivers.

The greater part of the mountains in this part of Gaul is not now included in France. Thus the eastern slope of the Jura belongs to the Swiss Republic, which is separated by the Rhine from Germany ; and the eastern slope of the Alps to Italy. Ancient Gaul was divided by the Romans into seventeen provinces, containing a great number of rich and populous towns, which were called *cities*, because their inhabitants governed themselves, like the people of ancient Rome, who, as you know, constantly assembled in the Forum and there elected their magistrates, and deliberated together upon public business. These cities, in imitation of the ancient capital of the world, were ornamented with splendid buildings, such as public baths and spacious palaces and temples, as well as theatres and circuses, where the gladiators fought with one another or with savage beasts, and where games of various kinds were celebrated.

It was the Romans who first introduced amongst the Gauls the taste for fine buildings and amusements, and very soon the latter were carried on by them with as much zest and enthusiasm as by the people of Italy.

About the time when the passion for these sports became general, a company of Christian Priests spread themselves over these provinces, and preached the Gospel of Christ to the people, who had hitherto worshipped false gods. In spite of the bitter persecution of many Roman emperors, the Christian religion made rapid progress in Gaul ; and, as it gained ground, the manners and character of the people underwent a complete change. The savage and cruel warriors became in a few years

gentle and humane, and it was difficult to recognize in them the descendants of those terrible devastators who had once brought Rome to the brink of ruin, and whose formidable army under



DRUIDS AND WARRIORS OF GAUL.

Brennus had been exterminated by thunderbolts at the very moment when it was preparing to sack the temple of Delphi.

Before their conversion to Christianity the ancient people of Gaul, originally called Celts, professed the most profound reverence for the priests of their false gods, to whom they gave the title of Druids. These Druids, who lived in the midst of the vast forests with which Gaul was then covered, offered up to their gods human victims, and many innocent little children were slain in this dreadful manner because their blood was supposed to be most acceptable to deities believed to be as savage and cruel as those who worshipped them.

It is no wonder that religious rites so frightful as these should produce amongst the Celtic nation a cruel and ferocious disposition, which the Gospel of Peace alone was able to subdue. At last the only thing left of the barbarous Celtic times was the Gallic language, and this, which spread with remarkable rapidity amongst the nations which had submitted to the Roman power, after taking up into itself a number of Celtic words, and undergoing some other changes, has formed the French language as it is now spoken.

CHAPTER II.

THE INVASION OF THE BARBARIANS.

From A.D. 406 to A.D. 481.

THE Romans had been masters of Gaul for many centuries, and, as we have already stated, had adorned the country with many beautiful buildings, the ruins of which are still to be seen, when the barbarous nations who originally came from the eastern part of Europe crossed the Rhine, spread themselves from one place to another over the surface of the country, and committed the most terrible ravages.

Although these barbarians did not all come from the same country, there is little doubt that they belonged for the most part to the Teutonic race, and were akin to those savage nations which Marius had formerly conquered in Italy. Their appearance spread the utmost terror throughout all the nations of Gaul.

[A.D. 406.] Amongst these invaders we may mention particularly the Visigoths, the Burgundians, whose ancestors came thus from the banks of the Vistula, and lastly, the Franks, a people who had left the great forests of Germany in vast numbers to seek on the other side of the Rhine a softer climate and rich plunder. The Franks had no settled dwelling-place, and wandered about, sometimes in one country, sometimes in another, very much as the Tartar tribes now roam about in Russia, and the predatory Arabs in Africa who live upon pillage.

The spoils which attracted this multitude of barbarians to Gaul were varied and numerous. Amongst them were slaves

and flocks, with vessels and cloths of gold and silver, of which they robbed the Gauls in order to carry them away to their homes beyond the Rhine. It was extremely rare for even a single Frank to stay behind when his companions returned to their solitudes, so seldom did these wild people prefer the sweets of a peaceful life to the perils and excitements of war.

If I could only draw a faithful picture of the faces and dress of these terrible adventurers when they appeared for the first time in Gaul, you could easily understand the terror that their appearance spread throughout the country. Their long hair was gathered up on the crown of their heads, and enormous moustaches which covered their thick lips, gave their faces a strange expression. They bore upon their shoulders a sort of iron pike covered with hooks, which they used like claws to catch men or to carry away anything which suited their convenience. They were armed with a francisque or battle-axe, which they handled with surprising strength and skill; and the rest of their dress agreed with this rough appearance. They wore a coarse cloth fastened round the body and limbs, their heads were generally uncovered in battle, and long hair, well anointed with rancid butter, was considered the most beautiful of all head-dresses.

You may imagine how the poor Gauls felt when they saw themselves attacked by bands of these savage and strange-looking men.

Their terror was so great that they did not even attempt any defence, but allowed themselves to be led away as slaves, with their flocks, behind the waggons loaded by the conquerors with the spoils of the country.

At this time the emperors of Rome were so weak and so helpless, that they had no soldiers to resist the savage hordes which were continually reappearing in the provinces of Gaul. Thus they were obliged to submit to the settlement of the

Franks in the district lying between the Rhine and the Meuse, where, after having devastated other parts of the beautiful country, they could more easily invade the rest of Gaul. The Franks who remained in the country received the name of Salians, because they settled themselves near the ocean, along the banks of a river called the Isala, which watered a part of Belgium. Another tribe of Franks who established themselves near the Rhine were known by the name of Ripuarians, which signifies in Latin, men of the river-bank.

[A.D. 413.] We shall soon hear more of these two tribes of Salian and Ripuarian Franks, with whom we must try to make ourselves familiar, as they afterwards became masters of Gaul, and were the ancestors of the French nation. Many years, however, passed away before they decided finally to establish themselves on the other side of the Meuse, as the greater part of them preferred to keep near Germany, where they had preserved friendly relations with a number of tribes of their own stock. As to the other barbarians, they brought with them their wives and children, their flocks, and indeed all they possessed; they advanced across Gaul, where the Visigoths had formed on the opposite side of the Loire a powerful kingdom, of which Toulouse became the capital. Meanwhile, the Burgundians drew near to the eastern chain of mountains, and also founded a kingdom which was called by the Latin name of Burgundia, whence comes the French name of Bourgogne.

The Visigoths were less savage than the Franks, and were moreover Christians, while the Franks still worshipped the Scandinavian divinities. They found no difficulty in establishing themselves in the south of Gaul; as for the Burgundians, who in their own country were nearly all carpenters and joiners, they soon began to follow their accustomed professions in the countries where they settled.

This undoubtedly explains why, even now, in the depart-

ments which constituted the old kingdom of Burgundy, a large number of skilful workmen in wood-carving are found, and why many of the playthings for children sold at Paris and other large cities are manufactured in this district of France at the present time.

CHAPTER III.

THE BAPTISM OF CLOVIS.

From A.D. 481 to A.D. 511.

NEARLY a hundred years had passed away before the different tribes of whom we read in the last chapter were really settled in Gaul. The Visigoths and the Burgundians were the first to establish themselves on a solid foundation, and their doing so was the greatest possible benefit to the parts of the country which they chose for their own.

The Franks, on the contrary, were far more turbulent in their disposition, and found it very difficult to give up the wandering life which they had hitherto led. Indeed, even when they adopted settled habitations on the west bank of the Meuse, they continued to send out small troops of robbers into the neighbouring provinces, from which they returned as soon as they had gathered all the spoil that they could carry away with them.

This, then, was the position of the provinces of Gaul more than a century after the invasion of the barbarians, when amongst the Salian tribe a chief appeared who was famous for his warlike

exploits, and who, collecting an army, advanced along the banks of the Meuse as far as Tournai, one of the principal cities of the country, and there took up his abode.

[A.D. 481.] This bold adventurer, who was named Clovis, belonged to the family of the Merovings or Merovingians, considered the most illustrious of the Salian tribe, because its chiefs



CLOVIS MADE KING.

were descended from an ancient Frank king, who was called Merovig, a word which means Great Warrior.

It would be a mistake to imagine that the kings of these far-off

times were great people, surrounded by pomp and magnificence like the emperors and monarchs of the present day, to whom every one submits, and who reign with undisputed sway. Frankish kings were simply warriors who had proved themselves to be braver or, perhaps, more fortunate than their companions in arms, and who, therefore, were chosen by universal consent to lead others in any warlike enterprise. These leaders or kings were necessarily cleverer, bolder, and even more ferocious than their soldiers, who were therefore obliged to fear as well as look up to them.

Kings were only distinguished by wearing their long hair well anointed with scented oil instead of rancid butter. Their head-dress was essential to their high position, for when the hair was cut short, their authority over their subjects was lost! Accordingly, you will often find the early chiefs amongst the Franks called Long-haired Kings.

These princes were always surrounded by a number of warriors, whom they bound to their service by means of presents, such as a fine war-horse, a battle-axe, or some other weapons of warfare. These warriors were called '*Leudes*,' a word which signifies that they were loyal and faithful to the master whom they had chosen; and they formed around him a numerous and invincible body-guard.

Clovis, then, was the king of those Salians who were settled at Tournai.

From that city he marched with an army of scarcely more than five or six thousand men, in order to carry off from the people living between the Meuse and the Loire their slaves, their property, and, indeed, anything that he could lay his hands upon. As Clovis was as crafty as he was bold, and, moreover, thought all means lawful which answered his own ends, he soon became the most powerful amongst those Frank princes who, like himself, made it their business to lay waste the country of Gaul.

In a few years, by stratagem and force of arms, Clovis surmounted every obstacle which lay in his way, and removed his residence from Tournai to Paris, which had formerly been called Lutetia by the Romans, and was then merely a little town, built between two arms of the river Seine.

In the next place, Clovis, by an act of treachery, caused the death of the king of the Ripuarian Franks, who had offended him ; and thus in a very few years found himself master of all the Franks who were scattered over the country lying between the Rhine and the Loire. He may be considered the first King of the Franks, and the founder of their monarchy ; and although his glorious conquests and personal courage are sullied by many acts of craft and cruelty, we must remember that the times in which he lived were very different from ours : civilization had advanced but little, and stratagem in warfare is a common practice with all barbarian tribes. At the present time, the American Indians have been known to lie under a bush, or hang motionless in the branches of a tree, for many days and nights, to watch for the foe whose life they wish to take.

[A.D. 493.] Clovis now married a beautiful princess named Clotilda, who was the daughter of a King of Burgundy. Clotilda was a Christian, and as good as she was beautiful. When she married Clovis, and saw him and all his people worshipping false gods, she was very sorrowful, and prayed earnestly for her husband, that he might be converted to the Christian religion, which can make the fiercest men gentle and humane, and teach them to control their wild passions.

It was the custom among the Franks, even when they inhabited their own dark forests in Germany, to disperse themselves over the country for the winter months, in order to rest from the fatigues of war. At such times the chiefs or kings kept a certain number of their most faithful servants near them, and, after they had settled in Gaul, instead of rewarding their services with war-

horses and battle-axes, they distributed amongst them lands and bondsmen to till them.

These lands thus received the name of Salique Lands, because the Salian tribe was the first to introduce the custom of distributing them amongst their followers. Clovis took care to grant large tracts of land to his companions in arms, in order to secure their remaining near him, and holding themselves ready to join his army when he required them. Every year, as soon as the lengthening days of spring returned, the Franks hastened from all parts of Gaul to rally round their king, and formed an assembly which was called the Champs de Mars. This assembly decided in what quarter war should be recommenced, and what new spoils should be carried off. The king was always obliged to lead the soldiers where they wished to go, for, as you may imagine, Clovis was not always sure of obedience from his turbulent subjects. Indeed, I can tell you a story which will show you that the King of the Franks was certainly not always their absolute master.

Before Clovis had become more powerful than all the other chiefs of his tribe, it happened one day that, after a hard fought battle, he took possession of the town of Soissons, which belonged to one of his enemies. The town was plundered from one end to the other, and each of the conquerors carried away with him to the camp the spoil which he had taken, to be divided equally, according to the custom of these barbarous tribes.

Amongst a great many valuable objects of every kind, there was a magnificent gold vase, ornamented with beautiful chased work, which Clovis admired so much that he proposed to the soldier who had carried it away from a church to let him have it as his share in the spoil. But the rough uncouth man, rather than give the king the vase he coveted, preferred breaking it up into a thousand pieces by striking it with all his strength with his heavy battle-axe. It never took much to rouse the anger of Clovis, who was always impatient at the least opposition to

his wishes ; however, in this case, he hid his resentment and dared not, before the whole army, punish the soldier who had ventured to disobey his orders. I must tell you that an ordinary weapon of this time, and for centuries after, was a mace bristling with sharp points ; it was of enormous weight, and only the strongest men could handle it with ease. Some time after the siege of Soissons, the king, who had never forgotten his soldier's disobedience, in reviewing his troops called this man out of the ranks to reprove him for some trivial offence. Then as the man stooped to pick up something which he had dropped, the king with a single blow of his mace laid him dead on the ground, striking him, he said, as he had struck the gold vase from Soissons.

Queen Clotilda was much grieved when she heard of this dreadful crime, which the king had committed by giving way to revenge and anger. She did not cease to ask God to soften her husband's heart, being persuaded that if he would only embrace the religion of Christ, he would learn the lessons of forbearance and kindness which it teaches, and know how to control his passions. Just at this time Clovis marched with his army to encounter another Germanic tribe, who having crossed the Rhine, asserted their right to drive the Franks from Gaul in their turn. These Germans were quite as brave, and much more numerous than the soldiers of Clovis, and they were followed by many other barbarous tribes, who threatened, moreover, to exterminate the whole Frank nation.

[A.D. 496.] Clovis advanced to meet them at a place called Tolbiacum or Zulpich, near Cologne, where a terrible battle was fought, which cost the lives of a great many warriors on both sides. The Frankish king, in spite of his courage and skill, was in danger of either being taken prisoner or killed, and for a short time the victory seemed to be impossible. It was at this perilous moment that Clovis recalled all that his gentle queen had said

to him of the mercy and goodness of God, who never forsakes those who call upon Him in times of distress and trouble. Then with a loud voice Clovis exclaimed, that if the God of Clotilda would grant him the victory, he would profess himself a Christian from that time forth.

No sooner did the soldiers hear their king's words, than they recovered their spirit and courage, while the Germans, on the contrary, fled on all sides in confusion and dismay, and victory declared itself on the side of the Franks.

Clovis, remembering that it was the God of Clotilda to whom he owed his preservation, sent his wife the welcome news that he had resolved to be baptized; and her joy was indeed great, thus to receive an answer to the faithful and loving prayers of so many years.

Shortly after, a good bishop named Remigius baptized Clovis and three thousand of his soldiers in the cathedral of Rheims, in the presence of a vast multitude of people, who were greatly impressed by so strange and wonderful a spectacle. It is in memory of this remarkable event that many centuries later the custom was established of leading the French kings with great pomp to the same cathedral church of Rheims, not, indeed, to receive baptism—because they had already been baptized—but in order that the Archbishop of Rheims, the successor of Remigius, might place upon their forehead the regal crown, with a solemn religious ceremony called the consecration of the King.

A large number of Franks, following the example of Clovis, were baptized a few months afterwards, although a vast number of the people still continued to worship false gods. It was only by degrees that the whole nation was converted to Christianity.

Clovis is often called the first King of France; and the portraits of him frequently bear that inscription. But this is a

mistake : for in his time there was neither a French kingdom nor a French people. The part of Gaul between the Rhine and the Loire was then peopled by the Gauls, Burgundians, and a multitude of other barbarians amongst whom the Franks were considered as foreigners. Clovis was at first only King of the Franks ; but he gradually extended his dominion over the southern countries on the other side of the Loire, of which the Visigoths were at one time the masters. He killed with his own hand in a battle fought at a place called Vouglé, a king of that warlike people named Alaric the Second, who was a very brave and good prince. But the Visigoths would not submit to the government of the Franks, and passing over the Pyrenees, they established themselves in Spain, where they founded a powerful monarchy.

Clovis did not long enjoy the fruits of his conquests. He died suddenly at Paris, when scarcely forty-five years old. Although he was the first amongst the Salian Franks to embrace Christianity, many chiefs of his family, and amongst others, his grandfather, Merovig, and his father, Childeric the First, had before his time led the Frank troops into the interior of Gaul ; and it was from the first of these princes that the name of Merovingians, or Merovingians, was given to all the kings of the same dynasty who reigned successively over the French nation.

CHAPTER IV.

CLODOMIR'S CHILDREN.

From A.D. 511 to A.D. 534.

AFTER the death of Clovis, his four sons divided between them as they pleased the vast dominions which their father had won by many hard-fought battles.

Each of the young princes was followed by a number of Leudes; and these were soon joined by the Frank warriors scattered in various parts of Gaul, who willingly rallied round their chiefs and helped them to establish their separate kingdoms.

These kingdoms took their names from the principal town of each district, and thus, in a very short time, in the country that the Franks had occupied under the great Clovis, there was a King of Paris, a King of Soissons, a King of Rheims, and a King of Orleans.

[A.D. 524.] Not one of these four princes was really brave or good; and in those times, as I have told you, men were all more or less rough and brutal in their manners and disposition. But the two most cruel of the new kings were Clotaire, King of Soissons, and Childebert, King of Paris, who, as soon as they heard that their brother Clodomir, King of Orleans, had fallen in a battle against the Burgundians, coveted his possessions, and agreed to divide the whole between them.

Now Clodomir had left three little sons, and the good Queen

Clotilda, their grandmother, took them with her to Paris, that she might bring them up under her own eye; for she was very fond of the children because they reminded her of the son whom she had lost, and to whom she had been much attached.

[A.D. 526.] Childebert's disposition was naturally envious and jealous in the extreme; he could not endure to see the Queen showing her affection for her little grandchildren, and so determined to get rid of them. His brother Clotaire entered into his wicked scheme, and both resolved to have the poor children murdered, and to appropriate the kingdom, to which of course they would then be the lawful heirs. Clotaire came to Paris, under pretence of visiting his brother, and announced that he and Childebert wished to conduct their little nephews to the kingdom over which they were destined to reign, that they might put them in possession of the treasures which their father had left them.

Queen Clotilda was far indeed from suspecting what were the real intentions of these cruel men; and when they asked her to commit the children to their care, in order to take them to see their inheritance, she was delighted, and fully approved of the plan. So she ordered the little princes to be dressed in their most beautiful clothes, provided them with everything for their journey, and bade them adieu with the tenderest affection, telling them they must try to become as wise and brave as their father Clodomir.

The three children set out in high spirits, believing they were going to be as happy as possible. But very soon they began to understand that their uncles had deceived them; for instead of being conducted to the palace, they were thrown into separate dungeons, where even the comfort of crying together was denied them. You may imagine what was their despair when they found themselves treated so cruelly. They passed sad and lonely days in their dark cells, thinking of the grandmother who had loved

them so dearly, and weeping bitter tears as they remembered they were now beyond the reach of her love and tenderness.

This shameful treatment was but the prelude of the sad fate which awaited them. Clotaire and Childebert could not feel secure while their brother's children were alive. They were afraid that the faithful followers of Clodomir might come and rescue the children from their prison, or, perhaps, that the Queen, hearing of their evil designs, might order them to give up her grandsons.

Queen Clotilda lived at Paris in the palace of the Thermæ, built by the Emperor Julian, of which some remains can still be seen. One day, when alone in her apartments there, she suddenly saw before her one of Childebert's officers, holding in one hand a dagger, and in the other a pair of large scissors.

The old Queen was terribly alarmed by the appearance of this man, whose face was as sinister as the message he was about to deliver. He had come to tell Clotilda that her sons, Clotaire and Childebert, had sent him to ask her to decide the fate of her little grandchildren; for their uncles had determined that they must either be put to death immediately, or lose the long hair which was the distinctive feature of the Merovingian race. If this hair was cut off, the children would of course be excluded from the throne, and condemned to a life-long imprisonment.

This fearful language, and the sight of the scissors and dagger, which the man brandished before her eyes, so terrified the Queen that she lost all power of self-control. In her despair she exclaimed that she would a hundred times rather know that the children were dead, than see them so dishonoured and consigned to the terrible fate of imprisonment for life. Perhaps in her secret heart Clotilda did not think that her sons could be so cruel as to murder the innocent children whose royal birth was their only offence.

When the officer took back the Queen's reply to Clotaire, he sent at once for two of the little princes; and they were brought secretly

to his palace, where Childebert was also present. When the children saw the doors of their cell open, and were told that they were to be taken to their uncles, they thought their sorrows were over, and that they now should be as happy as they had been in days past. Poor little boys! they did not know what a terrible fate awaited them.

As soon as they arrived at the palace, the hard-hearted Clotaire seized the elder of the little princes by the arm, threw him to the



CLOTILDA, AND THE CHILDREN OF CLODOMIR.

ground, and plunged a dagger into his heart, so that the poor child died without a struggle. Terrified by what he saw, the younger of the two boys threw himself on his knees before his uncle Childebert, and entreated him not to kill him as Clotaire had killed his brother. Cruel as Childebert was, he could not resist the child's prayers, and tried to prevent Clotaire from committing another terrible crime. But this bad man's heart was harder than stone; and indignant that Childebert should wish to spare the innocent blood which he had sworn to shed,

he threatened to stab him with the dagger he held if he tried to prevent him from killing the boy. Then Childebert, well knowing the vindictive character of his accomplice, turned away his head with horror, that he might not witness the second murder, which Clotaire accomplished without any opposition.

After this double crime, Clodoald the youngest child of Clodomir alone remained ; he escaped the fate of his two brothers by the courage of some faithful followers of his father, who rescued him from the prison where he was confined on the very night before Clotaire sent to put him also to death.

The news of this boy's safety somewhat softened the bitterness of Queen Clotilda's grief ; though she always remained inconsolable for the fearful death of the two grandchildren she had so dearly loved.

When he became a man, Clodoald was so good and charitable, that he spent his life in helping the poor and afflicted. Instead of trying to reclaim the royal crown, the prospect of which had proved so fatal to his two brothers, he kept his hair cut short, that he might dedicate the remainder of his life to God. He lived in retirement near Paris, and died, greatly esteemed for his useful and holy life, at a place which has since been called, in memory of him, Saint Clodoald, or more shortly, Saint Cloud.

CHAPTER V.

REPENTANCE.

From A.D. 534 to A.D. 561.

WHEN Clodomir's children were dead, Clotaire and Childebert divided the kingdom with their brother Thierry, King of Rheims.

They then made war together against the Visigoths, from whom they took the remainder of the provinces which they still possessed on the other side of the Loire ; so that these people, who had formerly occupied a large part of Gaul, now found themselves with only the one province of Septimania on the north side of the Pyrenees.

[A.D. 534.] About the same time the Franks destroyed the kingdom of Burgundy ; so that the power of the nation had never before been so formidable, or its dominions so extensive. For a long time, however, their bands overran the countries beyond the Loire without settling in them ; and if sometimes, like the old Roman emperors, the long-haired kings might be seen wearing the purple robe and seated in the circuses of Nîmes and Toulouse, many years passed before their rule over the countries of the south became stable and regular. In fact, they always gave the preference to the provinces nearest to Germany, where a large number of people continued on the eastern bank of the Rhine to acknowledge their supremacy.

[A.D. 555.] Clotaire and Childebert, who had so cruelly murdered their little nephews, did not escape the punishment due to their wickedness. After the death of their brother Thierry and

of his son Theodebert, one of the bravest princes of those times, whose inheritance they at once appropriated, these two wicked men began to quarrel with each other, and the rest of their lives was a succession of crimes of every kind. Their mother, the good Queen Clotilda, could not endure the sight of them, as they reminded her of her little grandsons' dreadful death; she therefore retired to a distant town, where she devoted her last days to God, entreating Him to touch her sons' hearts, and give them repentance for their sins. Here she closed a life which, in those barbarous and wild times, stands out as an example of gentleness and goodness, like a light in the surrounding darkness.

[A.D. 558.] In this year Chramnes, Clotaire's son, at the instigation of his uncle Childebert, rebelled against his father. This was a great crime; but God doubtless allowed Clotaire to find enemies amongst his own children as a punishment for his cruelty to the sons of his brother Clodomir. Soon after this Chilbert died, regretted by no one, as his whole life had been spent in deeds of violence and wickedness. Clotaire was now sole king of the Frank nation established in Gaul, and of all the tribes of the same origin who still lived in Germany. He took the title of Clotaire the First; but though he was the most powerful king that had ever reigned over the Franks, he was neither the better nor the happier for his exalted position.

Greatly irritated to find that Chramnes' revolt was not yet quelled, he decided to march in person, with a numerous army, against his rebellious son, who had retired into Brittany. There the prince was completely defeated in a battle which he fought against his father, and fell into the hands of the king's soldiers just as he was embarking with his wife and children; so that Clotaire soon heard that the fate of his unhappy son was now in his hands.

We already know that this man's heart was hard and pitiless,

and thus the fresh act of barbarity of which he was guilty cannot surprise us. In his fury he asked where his son was to be found ; and was told that he was confined a close prisoner in a cottage. Then Clotaire ordered that he should be bound with iron chains to a stake with his wife and children, and that the four corners of the hovel should be set on fire ! This dreadful order was executed, and the unhappy ones all perished in the flames, for, so much was the vengeance of the king dreaded, that no one dared to help them to escape.

[A.D. 560.] No sooner had this awful crime been perpetrated than Clotaire was torn with frightful remorse ; for this time it was his own blood which he had shed, and, hardened as he was, he could not think without horror of the fate of his miserable son, thus sacrificed in a moment of ungovernable anger.

From this time his palace became intolerable to him ; he might be seen wandering about in the fields, his face ghastly, and his forehead sprinkled with ashes, as a sign of mourning and despair. No one dared to approach him ; all fled in terror, fearing that he might give himself up to some new paroxysm of fury. Sometimes Clotaire lay prostrate on the floor of the churches, praying God to grant him pardon for his sins ; sometimes he went to visit the learned or holy men of his time, beseeching them to tell him of some remedy for his sufferings, but no one could comfort him, as his remorse was but the just punishment for all the evil things he had done.

[A.D. 561.] Such an existence was unendurable, and it was not long before the wretched man died, consumed with grief and repentance. His despair was terrible to the end ; and in his last hour he cried out that he now saw that God was more powerful than any earthly king.

This fearful story of sin and sorrow may teach us that evil actions never remain really unpunished ; for we see that Clotaire died miserably, and weighed down by terrible remorse, though

he had succeeded in sweeping from his path every single person who offended him or stood in his way, in concentrating in his own hands all the power of his family, and, in fact, in attaining what he considered the height of earthly power and dignity.

CHAPTER VI.

THE AUSTRASIAN FRANKS.

From A.D. 561 to A.D. 575.

As soon as the unhappy King Clotaire had breathed his last, four of his sons, who survived him, divided his dominions between them, just as the sons of Clovis had done forty-one years before. But the kingdom had much increased since that time; it now comprised not only all the dominions of the Salians and Ripuarians, and those of the Visigoths and Burgundians, but also the lands of many barbarous tribes on the other bank of the Rhine, who consented to obey the King of the Franks because he was descended from the long-haired kings of the Merovingian race.

[A.D. 561.] This vast empire was divided between Clotaire's sons, and each of them went to live in an important city, which he made the capital of his kingdom. One of them named Caribert, who was King of Paris and Aquitaine, died very soon after his father; and his three brothers appropriated his kingdom and divided it amongst them. Thus there were now only three kings, Chilperic, King of Neustria, Sigebert, King of Austrasia, and Gontran, King of Burgundy.

Before we go on, you must try to get a clear idea of the position

of Austrasia and Neustria, the two kingdoms of which we have now spoken for the first time.

The former was the country lying between the Meuse and the Rhine, which was formerly inhabited by the Riparian Franks, and to which they gave the name of Austrasia, because it was situated on the eastern coast; the word for east in the Teutonic language being '*Oster*.'

Neustria, on the contrary, was the country enclosed by the Meuse and the Loire, with the exception of Brittany. It was called Neustria because it lay westward, and the Frank word for west was '*Neoster*.' If you look at a map of France at this period, it will show you the dominions of the Franks, and will help you to distinguish the various kingdoms from each other.

Although the sons of Clotaire were all become great princes, Sigebert, King of Austrasia, the capital of which country was Cologne, was the most powerful of the three brothers.

To his share fell the German tribes separated from Gaul by the Rhine, a fearless and uncivilized people, who only waited their turn to spread themselves over the provinces where the Franks had acquired so much wealth; and he married a beautiful princess named Brunehaut, the daughter of a king of the Spanish Visigoths, to whom he was very much attached. Chilperic, King of Neustria, had married Brunehaut's sister, the good and virtuous Galsuintha. A few days after her marriage she was found strangled in her bed, and there seems to have been at first no trace of the person who had committed the crime. But at Chilperic's court there was a young girl named Fredegonda, who was marvellously beautiful, but of an ambitious and wicked disposition.

[A D. 568.] Though she was only the daughter of simple peasants, she had come to the court of Neustria to wait upon the young Queen Galsuintha. It is said that Chilperic was so

struck with her beauty that he determined to get rid of his new bride in order that he might make Fredegonda his wife. The circumstances attending these events are of course uncertain at this distance of time ; but there is no doubt that Brunehaut, Sigebert's wife, was miserable when she heard of her sister's death, and naturally filled with indignation against the person who was put in her place and proclaimed Queen of Neustria by the King's order.

Sigebert, at his wife's entreaty, declared war against his brother, and marched into Neustria with a large army, rendered more formidable from the number of barbarous chiefs who hastened from Germany at his call, followed by ferocious and pitiless soldiers, all ready to ravage the country of the Neustrians.

The Neustrians were quite as brave as the Austrasians, but often at war amongst themselves ; moreover, while the Franks of Neustria had been growing more peaceful in their habits since they had lived in Gaul, the Austrasian Franks, on the contrary, had remained rough and warlike from their perpetual contact with the nations of Germany.

Sigebert gained the victory over his brother and drove him to Paris, where probably he would have either dethroned or murdered him, had not Fredegonda despatched two assassins, who, surprising Sigebert in his sleep, stabbed him with a poisoned dagger, and left him dead upon the spot.

[A.D. 575.] This murder arrested the progress of the Austrasians, but it did not lessen the terrible hatred Fredegonda bore to Brunehaut, which was to prove so fatal to the Merovingian dynasty. Taking advantage of the trouble and consternation which Sigebert's death caused, Fredegonda, having surprised the Queen of Austrasia while she was undefended by her servants, ordered the guards to seize her, and had her confined in a gloomy prison with her little son Childebert the Second, who was only five years old, and forbade any person to visit her under pain of death.

CHAPTER VII.

QUEEN FREDEGONDA.

From A.D. 575 to A.D. 584.

THE captive Queen Brunehaut lived in constant fear and terror. Every time the door of her prison opened she expected to see some fierce soldiers tear away her little son from her arms, and perhaps murder him before her eyes. This terror became so dreadful, that when the Austrasian Leudes offered to convey the little prince secretly to his own kingdom, his mother was thankful to trust him to their care, although the separation was most painful to her.

Unfortunately it was very difficult to get the prince out of the prison, and to escape the vigilance of the guards who surrounded him ; but at last the queen put the child into a basket, which she let down unperceived at night from the walls by a rope. A faithful and devoted servant received the precious contents of the basket, and in a few minutes the young Childebert found himself in the midst of many loyal-hearted Austrasians, who hastened to acknowledge him as their king.

The child was of course too young to reign himself, but was placed under the care of one of the principal Austrasian chiefs, who was ordered to watch over the safety of the little king, and to govern the kingdom in his name under the title of Mayor of the Palace.

As we often hear in early French history of these mayors of

the palace, we ought to understand their precise position and duties. The officers so called had at first been domestic servants of the early Merovingian kings ; now they were great nobles of extensive influence, commanders of the Leudes, and, in fact, supreme magistrates of the kingdom.

Although Queen Brunehaut never ceased to lament the cruel necessity which separated her from her son, and though her face was marked with lines of sorrow, she was still so beautiful and so interesting from her troubles, that Prince Meroveus, Chilperic's son, found means to visit her in her prison, in spite of Fredegonda's order, and wished to make her his wife. Brunehaut was still quite inconsolable for the loss of her husband Sigebert, and at first refused the proposal ; but when Meroveus promised faithfully to protect the little King of Austrasia, and to preserve him from the many dangers which would surround him in his childhood, his mother yielded to her lover's earnest persuasion and promised to marry him. Within a few days a good bishop, named Pretextatus, performed the ceremony secretly, as the Prince had not dared to ask his father's leave, fearing that he would feel resentment against his brother's widow.

Fredegonda had always hated Meroveus, because he was Chilperic's son by a former wife ; and as soon as she discovered that the young prince had ventured to marry the captive Queen, without even asking his father's permission, she hastened to Chilperic with the news, and excited his anger against his son by representing to him in the most odious light the consequences of this marriage with a woman who might be regarded as the enemy of his family.

When Meroveus was told of his father's anger, he did not know how to conciliate him, and fled to take refuge in a church, hoping that the King would respect an asylum which was open to the greatest criminals.

Chilperic dared not tear his son from the foot of the altar ; but he let him know secretly that prompt submission to his wishes

could alone obtain his pardon. Meroveus, trusting in his father's affection, went to him, and throwing himself on his knees, begged for forgiveness. The King was touched with compassion as he saw his repentant son kneeling before him, and was about to raise and forgive him, when the cruel Fredegonda, who never left her husband for a moment, ordered the guards to seize the young prince, and before Chilperic could speak, she commanded an attendant to cut off Meroveus's long hair, and then had him sent to a monastery, from whence he could never more come out.

A monastery, at this time, and for many centuries after, was a large building, where a certain number of religious men lived together, wishing to have time and opportunity to pray to God and worship Him apart from the turmoils and constant warfare of those days. These men were, as you know, called monks; and those who took up their abode in the monastery were generally obliged to remain there to the end of their lives.

There were a great many monasteries in Gaul; the greater part of them were surrounded by strong walls, and looked far more like prisons than places of retreat from the world. Accordingly Fredegonda, when she had succeeded in shutting up Meroveus in one of these retreats, compelled him to embrace the monastic life, and to renounce all claim to the throne, of which she had rendered him incapable by depriving him of his long and abundant hair.

Fredegonda was of the most implacable nature; she pursued the good Bishop Pretextatus with the most deadly hatred, for having dared to marry Meroveus and Brunehaut; and at last she had him assassinated at the very foot of the altar where he was celebrating mass according to the rites of the Roman Church.

[A.D. 577.] The Austrasian Leudes had demanded, that Brunehaut should be restored to her son, and at last permission was given for her to return to her own kingdom; but from this moment her whole life was a succession of sorrows and misfor-

tunes. During her absence, the mayors of the palace, taking advantage of the youth of Childebert the Second, had become the real kings of Austrasia, and it was from them alone that the Frank chiefs would consent to receive any orders.

Meroveus did not long survive the disgrace which had fallen upon him. Escaping from the monastery, which was like a grave to him, he was on the point of passing into Austrasia, where he hoped to regain his wife, when he was pursued by his father's soldiers; and seeing that he must fall into their hands, he chose to die rather than endure the fate which he felt sure would await him. He therefore entreated one of his friends who was with him, to run him through the body with his sword, and was dead before his enemies could reach him.

All these murders were Fredegonda's work, and it seemed as if she could get rid of every one whom she hated. But in the midst of her apparent prosperity, she was herself struck with a terrible blow, which caused her the deepest sorrow. She had two little boys, and, if she was capable of loving anything, she loved them. In one night these children sickened and died of the same disease; and their unhappy mother, beside herself with grief, looked around her with frenzied longing for fresh victims to her cruelty.

In those times nothing was more common than for all classes of the Frank nation to believe implicitly in witches and sorcerers. This faith, in our more enlightened age, seems ridiculous, and we know that no human being can effect what God has made impossible. However, this miserable woman, being quite unable to bear her sorrow, sent for a number of old women from Paris, who pretended by witchcraft to discover hidden secrets, and commanded them to tell her to what unexpected cause she had to attribute the sudden death of her two sons. When the Queen found that these poor creatures, who had really no claim to know more than their neighbours, were not able to give any explanation of

the children's death, she put them to frightful tortures, until they confessed that they themselves had caused the little princes' death by enchantments, at the desire of some persons who hated Fredegonda. Of course the whole statement was false ; but these wretched women chose to accuse the innocent, rather than endure the torments to which the Queen subjected them. Every one named by them as instigators of the sorcery which had caused the little boys' death was murdered by the Queen's order, and among them many of the chief nobles in Neustria, honest and good men, entirely ignorant of the crime of which they were accused ; and thus the grief of Fredegonda proved as destructive and atrocious as her love or hatred.

The last, and perhaps the most terrible, of her deeds of wickedness was the murder of the weak-minded old husband whose reign she had filled with scenes of bloodshed and horror.

[A.D. 584.] One evening Chilperic, on returning from hunting, was struck with a dagger by a person unknown, who disappeared in the gathering darkness. The King fell from his horse, and died in a few minutes ; and the next day it was discovered that his murderer was no other than a young man named Landri, whom every one knew to be a favourite of the Queen. Of course, therefore, no one could doubt that Fredegonda herself was the author of the outrage, although she loudly accused Brunehaut and the Austrasians. Knowing better than any one else the ground for suspicion against Landri, she kept him near her person, and made him mayor of the palace to the young Clotaire, her last surviving son, who had just succeeded his unhappy father on the throne of Neustria.

Though Chilperic's fate was so fearful, perishing as he did at the criminal instigation of the woman who had pretended to love him, yet none of the Franks regretted his loss ; for by trusting Fredegonda he had placed in her hands the very power she had so shamefully abused, and enabled her to murder his wife Galsuintha, his

brother Sigebert, and his son Meroveus. He had thus brought about the ruin of his own race, and armed against himself, by his weak compliance, the very hand which was at last to strike him.

CHAPTER VIII.

BRUNEHAUT'S DEATH.

From A.D. 584 to A.D. 621.

[A.D. 584.] CLOTAIRE, the son of Chilperic the First and Fredegonda, was only six months old when, by his father's death, he became King of Neustria. His mother therefore flattered herself that she should reign in his place till he was old enough to govern the kingdom alone. But the Neustrian lords refused to obey her, and Gontran, King of Burgundy, the little Clotaire's uncle, became the guardian of him and of his kingdom.

Gontran was not a bad prince ; but the Austrasian Franks, to whom he refused to give up Fredegonda that they might punish her for her crimes, did everything they could to make his reign difficult and troublesome. Gontran felt some pity for the wretched woman, and therefore was unwilling to abandon her to the rage of her enemies ; but he could not himself endure the sight of her, and banished her to Rouen, where, not long before, Brunehaut, by her order, had endured such a cruel imprisonment.

At this time it was so common an event for princes to be murdered by their relatives or subjects, that Gontran, although he

had really no personal enemy, could not help trembling for his life. Accordingly, one day when a great crowd was collected in a large church, he called upon the people, in a loud voice, to allow him to live three years longer, as by that time Childebert the Second, King of Austrasia, would be old enough to protect his little cousin Clotaire.

By this time Fredegonda found herself deserted by every one, for wicked people like her may find accomplices but never possess a friend. Her indignation against those who had deprived her of the regal power which she had obtained by so many crimes was unbounded. She hated Gontran for sending her to prison, and equally disliked Brunehaut and her son Childebert, who had fortunately escaped from her power in his infancy. Although she was a prisoner, she found means to satisfy her thirst for vengeance, and by a large sum of money bribed some servants to poison Childebert during his evening meal.

[A.D. 596.] The aged Gontran did not long survive his nephew, and his death was the signal for new troubles and new wars. The Austrasian Franks, and those of Neustria, quarrelled over the ruins of the kingdom of Burgundy; and Fredegonda, taking advantage of the disturbed state of affairs, escaped from her prison and went to the court of her son Clotaire, who was then scarcely thirteen years old. Here she regained the power she had lost, and we cannot tell what further evil she might have done had not death overtaken her when she little expected it, and ended at once her life and her crimes.

[A.D. 597.] Whilst the young King of Neustria, called Clotaire the Second to distinguish him from his grandfather Clotaire, whose history I have told you, was growing up under the eyes of Landri, the mayor of the palace, (the murderer, as you will remember, of Chilperic,) he had learned to hate Brunehaut, who was represented to him as the bitter enemy of his family.

After the death of her son Childebert, the Queen of Austrasia

had the care of her little grandsons, of whom the eldest was still a boy, called Thierry the Second. Instead of trying to make the young princes brave and noble, their grandmother gave them such a wretched education that they were quite unfit to rule a kingdom, or to make themselves respected by the turbulent and unmanageable Austrasian nobles.

Brunehaut appears to have acted thus from motives of ambition, thinking that she would be allowed to keep the regency of the kingdom as long as she lived ; yet, afraid to trust the nobles who had formerly been the King's most devoted friends, she caused the death of some of them by treachery, and excited the suspicions of the rest. From this time the native lords conspired with the barbarous chiefs whom Sigebert had summoned from Germany, and only waited their opportunity to revenge themselves on the princess, with whom they determined that the whole of the royal race of the Merovingians of Austrasia should perish.

[A.D. 613.] Things were in this state when Thierry the Second died, leaving four little boys, whom their great-grandmother wished to bring up in the same way as their uncles. But this time her plans were frustrated, and her enemies determined at once to free themselves from her power.

There was amongst the Austrasian lords a general named Varnachairius, who was justly esteemed for his courage and ability. He often led the soldiers of Brunehaut against the Neustrians or Burgundians in the wars, and whenever he appeared on the field victory was on his side.

When sovereigns are unjustly suspicious, there are always plenty of people about them who are ready to bring them false reports of their worthiest servants, and perhaps obtain as a reward for their treachery the estates and honours of those who have suffered by their false accusations.

A sycophant of this kind told Brunehaut that Varnachairius,

in a moment of irritation, had said some things which were disrespectful about his royal mistress. On this vague accusation, Brunehaut instantly wrote to an officer who was devoted to her service, and ordered him to effect, in some way, the death of Varnachairius. When the letter was finished she read it over before despatching it ; and it happened to Brunehaut, as to many others who act upon the first impulse of anger and vexation, that she immediately regretted having written anything which would cause this brave man's death. So she tore the letter into a hundred pieces, and threw it under the table. Brunehaut doubtless thought no one would ever know of the plot she had formed against Varnachairius's life ; but a servant, who was perhaps bribed by her enemies, having collected the fragments of the parchment that she had torn, carried them to the general himself. Varnachairius soon put the pieces together, and discovered that, upon the most unworthy suspicion, he might have been put to death, and that even then his life was no longer safe. He therefore entered into secret negotiations with the King of Neustria, and offered to put his great-aunt Brunehaut and all his young cousins into his power.

As Clotaire hated Brunehaut, he eagerly accepted Varnachairius's offer, promising to make him mayor of the palace of Burgundy if he would only bring the Queen to him bound hand and foot. Nearly all the Austrasian and Burgundian lords joined in the conspiracy, and the Queen found herself friendless and defenceless, and delivered with her grandchildren up to Clotaire.

It was a sad sight when Brunehaut, the daughter, wife, sister, and mother of kings, was dragged by the soldiers before her pitiless nephew, who ordered that her royal mantle should be taken from her, and her crown torn from her brow. She was then clothed in miserable rags, in which she was made to ride for three days upon a camel's back in the sight of the rude populace, who pelted her with mud and overwhelmed her with insults. After

this punishment, Clotaire ordered a wild horse to be brought, and the unhappy woman was tied by her long hair to its tail ; the fiery animal was then let loose, dragging the miserable Queen across the thorns and brambles with which the country was covered, and which soon tore her to pieces. The place where this terrible event happened at Paris is just where, at the present day, the Rue St. Honoré crosses the Rue Croix des Petits Champs.

Many years later, the remains of her mutilated body were found in a tomb, and amongst the shreds of clothing it is said that an iron spur was discovered, which had been attached to the horse's side to increase its speed.

The great-grandchildren of Brunehaut were all put to death by Clotaire's order, who was as cruel as the grandfather whose name he bore. By the death of these children the great family of Austrasian kings, of whom so many tales of horror and wickedness are told, was finally exterminated.

CHAPTER IX.

THE MONASTERIES.

From A.D. 624 to A.D. 638.

DAGOBERT THE FIRST, the son and successor of Clotaire the Second, was one of the most popular of the early race of kings, and was long held in remembrance in the country.

[A.D. 613.] Clotaire had become sole master of Austrasia by the extinction of the family of Brunehaut. At first he intended to unite this country with the kingdoms of Neustria and Burgundy, which he already governed by mayors of the palace.

[A.D. 622.] But he soon discovered that the Austrasian lords did not like their subordinate position in the Frank Empire, and he resolved to give them his son Dagobert for a king. Thus the young prince received the crown of Austrasia, which had been bought so dearly by crime and murder, and when Clotaire died, after a long reign, he found himself King of the whole of Gaul [A.D. 628], and even of the German provinces over which his father had ruled before him.

The Franks were now very different to what they had been in the time of Clovis and of his sons ; instead of continually engaging in warlike expeditions, they were dispersed over the territory of Gaul, and each one had begun to cultivate his own land, or kept slaves to do so for him ; but, according to their old custom, the Franks never cared to go far from those chiefs whose good and evil fortunes their fathers had followed.

Thus when the time for the annual Champ de Mars arrived, the

people were no longer seen pressing their kings to lead them on some warlike expedition, where they could enter upon fresh plunder and robbery. The great assemblies, which had formerly been so noisy and tumultuous, were now frequented only by a limited number of chiefs—called dukes and counts—by bishops, styled prelates, and by liegemen of the king, enriched by the possession of Salic lands or by the benefices * which they held through royal munificence.

In these assemblies the mayors of Neustria, Burgundy, and Austrasia occupied the highest rank. The man who was at this time invested with the dignity of mayor amongst the Austrasians, was called Pepin—surnamed Pepin the Old, to distinguish him from two other Pepins of whom we shall speak presently. Dagobert discovered in Pepin a haughty and ambitious disposition ; fearing therefore that he might put himself at the head of the malcontents in the kingdom, he deposed him from his office, and made Œga, a Neustrian duke, whose loyalty he trusted, mayor in his place. As the Austrasians complained that they had no king living amongst them, Dagobert sent them his little son, who was only three years old, and made him King of Austrasia, under the title of Sigebert the Second [A.D. 632] ; while another of his sons, called Clovis the Second, received for his portion Neustria and Burgundy, and the arrangement was approved by an assembly of Frank and Burgundian lords ; yet this precaution did not prevent new and heavy troubles falling upon the family of the Merovingians.

Since you now know something of Dagobert's history, I think I ought to tell you about Saint Eligius, who in his early life had been the cleverest goldsmith of that time, when the art of

* By a benefice is meant an estate or piece of land, given in the same way as the war-horses and armour were formerly distributed by the Frank kings amongst their companions in arms, in order to attach them to their service and ensure their fidelity.

engraving upon metals had attained a very high degree of perfection ; and who in this capacity enriched the royal treasury with many valuable works, and deserved the confidence with which Dagobert left in his charge his personal property, and the financial administration of the kingdom.

Of the wealth obtained by his art, and by his official position, Eligius made the noblest use. Nothing delighted him so much as to redeem slaves from captivity ; for this purpose he would spare no expense, often purchasing at once fifty or sixty captive Saxons, setting them instantly free, and caring with the greatest diligence for their welfare afterwards.

In later life he was consecrated Bishop of Noyon ; but not contented with a peaceful life at home, he went as a missionary into Flanders, which was then occupied by heathens. Here wonderful effects were produced not only by his preaching, but by the business-like skill with which he provided for his new converts and hindered them from relapsing.

He is in fact to be considered as one of the apostles of the Netherlands. As, in common with most other eminent Christians of the time, he was a great founder of monasteries, and was anxious if possible to induce his new converts to enter them, we will take this opportunity of giving a short account of the mode of life pursued in these establishments.

The greater proportion of good men who entered them in order to renounce the life of the outer world, had simply as their aim the giving up of their whole time to God in prayer and meditation. But there were many persons amongst them whose zeal for religion led them also to the study of science and literature, a study then almost forgotten amidst the rough and turbulent Franks, whose habits and temper made all quiet occupations distasteful to them.

The Church alone, in these remote times, encouraged the love of study by the security she offered to those who wished to give

themselves up to learned researches. It is to the unbroken calm to be found in these monasteries that we owe the preservation of some of the most celebrated works of antiquity, and a great many useful facts the knowledge of which, without the persevering labours pursued there, would have been lost to us.

In Dagobert's time very few men except the monks knew how to read or write ; and, as the art of printing was not discovered till many centuries later, there was no possibility of multiplying books, which in our day is so easy. After the daily course of devotion was over, the principal occupation of the educated men amongst them was to reproduce by copying the precious works in the monastic libraries ; which were the chief storehouses of such Greek and Latin manuscripts as had escaped the ruthless hand of the barbarian spoilers when the Roman Empire was destroyed. This labour was not only profitable to the monks themselves, who thus gained knowledge which would otherwise have been denied them, but it was of the utmost value to the world generally, which was one day to find in the cloisters such elements of knowledge as had been rescued from barbarism. As no one was allowed to be idle in monasteries, those who were not men of cultivated minds were taught to follow manual occupations with great energy and perseverance. Some of them undertook to fell the forests which covered many parts of Gaul, some cultivated the land, and reared crops of wheat and vegetables for the good of the community. Others made roads which opened communication between their monasteries and the neighbouring towns, or constructed dykes, to preserve the country from the overflow of the torrents and rivers which ran through it. Many provinces were indebted to the monks for the digging of deep ditches, to receive the stagnant water of marsh lands, whose noxious exhalations had spread through the surrounding country deadly epidemic diseases, and annually depopulated entire districts. It constantly happened that the unhealthy marshes thus drained

by these industrious men, often at the peril of their own lives, were transformed into beautiful meadows, and became a source of abundant wealth to all the populations living on the banks of the rivers.

You will now easily understand what great services the industry and activity of the monks rendered the kingdom, and how their contemporaries learned to look upon them with gratitude and respect, as they knew themselves to be unable to undertake such gigantic labours, and ignorant of the means of carrying them into execution.

I need not say that the wise King Dagobert was grateful to the monks, and granted them his protection ; distributing among them many valuable estates and benefices, just as the Frank kings had formerly bestowed them upon their captains and bravest soldiers, in order to encourage them in their noble efforts.

In honour of the monks of Saint Denis, a small town near Paris, he built a large and beautiful church, ornamented with a great many magnificent works of jewellery and wrought gold, which Saint Eligius made at his desire. The columns, the arches, and the walls of the church were decorated with gold and silver tissue, and with cloth embroidered with pearls and precious stones. Under it immense subterranean caverns were excavated, and here Dagobert chose his own tomb and that of the princes who should succeed him ; these catacombs were long used as the burying place of the kings of France.

He also did good service to the age in which he lived by protecting learned men outside of monasteries, who were rare indeed at that time. This was the more praiseworthy because he could neither read nor write, and in our times would be considered a very ignorant man. Still he knew how to appreciate the merits of science and learning, and held in high esteem those who devoted themselves to cultivate them.

Many of his successors followed his example by founding a

number of monasteries both for men and women, which were richly endowed—sometimes with the mistaken idea of winning God's favour, and obtaining the pardon of sins. Thus sanctuaries of religion, asylums for science, nurseries of piety, and refuges for the sad and miserable, grew and multiplied.

Unfortunately, as time went on, the wealth which had accumulated from various rich gifts and endowments, and from the great works in which they were employed, became a temptation to the monks, who had taken the vow of poverty; and the zeal and goodness of the men of an earlier time were not seen in their successors.

CHAPTER X.

THE INDOLENT KINGS.

From A.D. 638 to A.D. 656.

WE now come to a race of kings known in history as *fainéants*—that is “indolent” or “do-nothing” kings—because they abandoned the care of governing their kingdom to their ministers, and made their supreme power an excuse for giving themselves up to all kinds of self-indulgence and idleness.

At the same time, you must not think that *all* the Merovingians to whom history has given this title deserved it by their own fault, for the greater part of them were orphans, to whom ambitious and designing men only left the semblance of royalty, while they exercised the kingly power in their name, and often to their injury.

[A.D. 638.] The first Frank monarchs stigmatized by the title of

fainéants were the sons of Dagobert—Sigebert the Second, King of Austrasia, and Clovis, King of Neustria. One was scarcely eight years old, and the other four, when, by the death of their father they found themselves called to assume the mere shadow of royalty—Sigebert under the dominion of Pepin the Old, whom the Austrasians had recalled, and Clovis under the absolute sway of Ebroin, a Neustrian lord, to whom Dagobert had formerly entrusted the care of his eldest son. In both kingdoms these men exercised the power of the sovereign, under the title of Mayors of the Palace; and it was to them that the Frank and Burgundian lords were in subjection, as well as many of the barbarous chiefs of the German nations, who still lived on the other side of the Rhine. The dukes in the south of France also recognized their authority, although the greater part of them only waited for a favourable occasion to free themselves from a monarchy which they saw on the point of falling to any one clever enough to take possession of it.

[A.D. 655.] Sigebert only reigned a few years in Austrasia, and by his death the kingdom was again united to that of Neustria under Clovis the Second, the most indolent of the Frank kings of whom we have hitherto spoken, but whose self-indulgence and effeminacy were surpassed by many of his successors. This king lived in retirement in a country seat or château, where he only thought of amusing himself, and eating, drinking, and sleeping. He never went out unless the weather was fine, and then he mounted a chariot, drawn by four white oxen with gilded horns, and drove slowly through the streets of Paris, then so narrow and muddy that a carriage drawn by spirited horses could scarcely have made its way through them.

All this time the mayor of the palace governed the kingdom instead of the king; and as his authority was unlimited, no one dared to dispute his wishes, not even the poor helpless king, who was entirely submissive to his caprice.

Once a year the mayor allowed Clovis to show himself publicly, at the assembly of the Champ de Mars, where, as you know, the dukes, bishops, and Leudes gathered together, accompanied by a number of persons from their different dominions.

On these occasions the King was robed in a magnificent mantle of royal purple, a crown was placed on his head, and around his neck was fastened a collar sparkling with diamonds and precious stones. In this magnificent array the King appeared before his people, but was forbidden to say a single word, and, above all, to give any order, without the mayor's leave.

As soon as the ceremony was over, Clovis the Second was taken back to his apartments, where he led the lazy and luxurious life which he greatly preferred to the cares of royalty. Nothing is more difficult to overcome than slothfulness when it has become a fixed habit, and no vice is more contemptible ; for God has appointed to every one, whether rich or poor, king or peasant, his work in the world, and expects it to be accomplished.

As you may imagine, Clovis found his idle and aimless life, therefore, very wearisome ; and the only relief to the tedium of the long hours was watching the performances of a set of jugglers, whom the mayor sometimes allowed to enter the royal residence, for fear the King should begin to think of seeking for amusement elsewhere. It happened one day that, as Clovis was walking listlessly before his palace, he saw a beautiful young girl led past to a neighbouring market by some foreign merchants, who intended to sell her as a slave.

As we have seen in the life of Saint Eligius, this dreadful custom of selling men and women as slaves was very common in Europe at this time. The greater part of the unhappy people—who were exposed like beasts in the public markets—were prisoners of war, or children whom robbers had carried away from their parents ; and this beautiful girl, whose name was Bathilda, seems to have been among the latter ; for when the King inquired her

history, he soon learned that she was a princess from a distant country, who, when walking by the sea shore, was surprised by pirates, and, in spite of her tears and cries, had been carried away to a ship, which immediately set sail, taking her far from home and friends. This sad story seems to have excited the interest and pity of Clovis ; and as he was much struck with the girl's beauty, he paid the merchants the large sum they asked for their slave, and leading Bathilda to the palace, declared that he should make her his wife. Thus Bathilda escaped the cruel fate of slavery and took her place upon the throne of France, where she was greatly beloved for her goodness and many excellent qualities ; and, like Clotilda, the wife of Clovis the First, deserves to be held in affectionate remembrance.

With her the King was happy, and perhaps her influence over him might have been wholesome had he lived ; but he died [A.D. 656] at a comparatively early age, leaving Bathilda regent of the kingdom, and the guardian of three children, who were one day to be called to wear the royal crown, the weight of which their father had not had the strength or wisdom to support.

CHAPTER XI.

MAYORS OF THE PALACE.

From A.D. 656 to A.D. 678.

CLOTAIRE THE THIRD, King of Neustria, and Childeric the Second, King of Austrasia, were the eldest sons of Clovis and Queen Bathilda, but, as they were still very young, their mother, who was invested with the title of regent, chose a mayor in both kingdoms, who was to govern in the place of the two youthful kings. Thierry, who was the youngest of the three brothers, was carefully kept under his mother's eye, and when, ten years afterwards, Bathilda, weary of the world, retired to a convent which she had founded at Chelles, near Paris, she took him with her, and his very existence was for a long time forgotten.

[A.D. 660.] The mayor whom Bathilda had chosen to govern Neustria was Ebröin, a man of great ability, of whose devotion to her service she had already had frequent experience. He did not spring either from any noble family or from the Leudes; and consequently all ranks were jealous at his elevation to power, fearing that he would do what he could to humiliate them and reduce them to submission.

The mayor who ruled over the Austrasians, on the contrary, was a duke named Vulfold, whom the chief men of the kingdom had recommended to Bathilda, hoping that he would exercise his authority in their favour; but as Vulfold was only their equal, it very soon happened that a large number of the Frank chiefs, and of the dukes of Southern Gaul, who till this time had been

under the power of the King of Austrasia, refused to obey him any more, and rebelled against the mayor who was his representative.

[A.D. 670.] Just at this time Clovis the Third, who was scarcely more than a child, died, and Ebröin, who did not wish to lose his power as mayor, went to seek Thierry in the convent of Chelles, and laid at his feet the diadem ornamented with jewels, the beautiful purple mantle magnificently embroidered with precious stones, and the sceptre of gold, all symbols of supreme power.

Bathilda's young son was scarcely sixteen at this time, and could not help being delighted at finding himself thus unexpectedly called from the monotonous and dull life which he had hitherto led in the convent, and placed by Ebröin upon the vacant throne of Neustria, little dreaming of all the troubles and sorrows which awaited him.

As soon as the lords of Neustria and Burgundy were told that Ebröin had dared to proclaim the last son of Clovis the Second, king under the title of Thierry the Third, without asking their consent, they called the nobles of Austrasia to their help, and having surprised Ebröin and the young king, they seized them and had their heads shaved, and then shut them up in separate cloisters; Ebröin in the Monastery of Luxeuil, situated among the wild mountains, now called the Vosges; and Thierry in the Abbey of Saint Denis, which had been so richly endowed by his grandfather Dagobert. [A.D. 671.] After this the throne of Neustria was offered to Childeric the Second, who thus found himself King of the whole of Frankish Gaul. This election was powerfully supported by Léger, Bishop of Autun, who during the life of the young King Clotaire the Third, had been summoned to the Court by Queen Bathilda to unite with Ouen, Bishop of Rouen, in a council of regency during the king's minority. As long as Childeric was guided by the advice of Léger he prospered, but as soon as he ceased to listen to him,

he fell into trouble ; and was so blind to his own interest and so ungrateful as to shut up Léger in the monastery of Luxeuil, although he owed everything to his wisdom and power of government.

These ceaseless changes show us what sort of power the Frank lords possessed, to whom the royal authority was nothing more than a yoke which it was easy to break at any moment. Another instance of this soon occurred ; Childeric was so imprudent as, for some trifling offence, to order a young Austrasian Count named Bodilo, to be fastened to a stake and beaten with a rod. The young nobleman immediately swore to wipe out the offence that he had received by the blood of the king ; and from the very moment when this degrading punishment was known amongst the nobles of the kingdom, a great cry of indignation was raised against Childeric, who had dared to inflict upon an Austrasian lord a punishment reserved only for slaves. The act was looked upon by the Frank Chiefs as a personal insult, and they bound themselves by a solemn oath to bring down vengeance on the King sooner or later.

[A.D. 673.] The King and Queen were soon after in the country with their children, when the enraged and pitiless Bodilo surprised them in a forest, and had them murdered without mercy before his eyes. With them their eldest son was also slain ; only one infant of a few months old being saved from the murderer by a faithful servant, who hid him under his cloak, and carried him to the monastery of Chelles, where he was brought up secretly, under the name of Brother Daniel.

Scarcely had Childeric drawn his last breath, when the lords who had just committed this awful crime went to the Abbey of Saint Denis, where Thierry the Third had been shut up, brought him out of his retreat, and replaced him on the throne from which they themselves had deposed him only a few years before. As this revolution restored Saint Léger to liberty, he returned to

Autun, where the people of his diocese received him with the greatest marks of honour and delight. Ebröin however, having escaped from Luxeuil, pursued him with renewed hatred, and laying siege to Autun seized him, and after having his eyes put out, ordered him to be beheaded.

[A.D. 678.] But soon after the death of this holy martyr, Ebröin his murderer perished in his turn by the dagger of an assassin ; and such a series of crimes appears at last to have wearied the patience of the Franks. It seemed as if murder and outrage followed the Merovingians from generation to generation : and our history has now to relate the fall of that family once so illustrious, and now so miserably disgraced.

CHAPTER XII.

PEPIN D'HERISTAL.

From A.D. 678 to A.D. 691.

THERE was at this time in Austrasia a brave and ambitious young man, called Pepin d'Heristal, because he was the owner of a castle of that name on the banks of the Meuse. He was the grandson, on his mother's side, of Pepin the Old, of whom I have told you in the history of the Rois Fainéants ; and the Austrasian lords, amongst whom he occupied a distinguished rank, placed great confidence in him.

[A.D. 679.] The prince who then reigned over the kingdom was Dagobert the Second, the reputed son of Sigebert the Second, one of the last kings of Austrasia. He was, like all the Merovings of this time, a genuine Roi Fainéant, in whose name it was very easy for Pepin to govern the country ; but this ambitious man, disdaining the phantom of a king, abandoned him, when he became useless to him, to the mercy of the rebellious lords, who had him tried by an assembly of their partizans and condemned to death.

After this murder Pepin could easily have placed the crown upon his own head, but he chose rather to take the title of Duke of Austrasia, which he knew no one would attempt to contest ; and indeed the nobles of the kingdom were well pleased that the dignity should be settled permanently in his family, hoping by that concession to secure the same advantage for themselves in the provinces which they possessed.

[A.D. 687.] We must remark here that Dagobert the Second

was the last King of Austrasia, and that from that time there was amongst the Franks of this country no power but that of hereditary dukes. Thierry the Third was a weak-minded man, who since the death of Ebröin had been only the plaything of the mayors of his palace ; he was even so foolish as to involve himself in a quarrel with Pepin, by reproaching him for granting the discontented Neustrians an asylum in Austrasia. This was quite enough to bring about a war between the two kingdoms, on which the Franks on both sides entered with fiery zeal. It was no longer a simple quarrel between turbulent and rebellious lords, but the struggle for power of the great Austrasian dukes ; and it ended in the complete overthrow of the Neustrian royalty. The two armies met at the village of Testry near Peronne, which became the scene of a terrible battle in which Pepin, assisted by the Austrasian lords, gained a complete victory.

From this moment Pepin's rule was as fully established over Neustria as it had been for a long time over the other kingdom ; and Thierry the Third, after having been present at the battle of Testry, fled in haste to Paris, where the conqueror arrived at the same time, and obliged the king to accept him as Mayor of the Palace. The battle of Testry is memorable, because it definitely established the supremacy of the Austrasian dukes over the Neustrian monarchs. It is true that new troubles often arose in the two kingdoms ; but they were the result of the ambition of the discontented lords rather than of animosity between the two nations, who henceforth formed one united people.

From this period Pepin d'Heristal ruled alone over the Frank monarchy, whilst Thierry the Third, shut up in his palace, was quite satisfied to wear the badge of sovereignty and to show himself from time to time to the people, dressed in royal purple, with the diadem on his forehead, and that sceptre in his hand for which his family had paid so dearly. He reigned thus for many

years, as his father Clovis the Second had reigned before him ; and well deserved like his father the surname of *Fainéant*.

Pepin soon found that the German nation and the Frank lords, after having assisted him with a strong hand to throw down the power of Neustria, aspired to the same independence which he had gained for himself ; so that he was soon reduced to his own Leudes, whose number he greatly increased by gifts of money and benefices. To satisfy his old companions in arms, he formally re-established the assembly of the *Champ de Mars*, where they delighted to come, as their ancestors had done, and deliberate on projected warlike expeditions ; for many years passed before peace really existed among these barbarous warriors. Pepin, too, was obliged to hold himself ready to keep within due bounds the Frisians, Swabians, Bavarians, and Saxons, who were on the other side of the Rhine ; and, in order to do this, he removed the seat of government to Cologne on the banks of that river, where he could keep watch over the German people, and at the same time see that the Franks of Gaul were obedient and loyal.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE DEFEAT OF THE SARACENS.

From A.D. 691 to A.D. 741.

As we have spoken of the Frisians, Swabians, Bavarians, and Saxons, we ought also to say a few words about the country which they inhabited. They were a German people gathered from a variety of idolatrous tribes, who worshipped false gods, just as the Franks had done before the battle of Tolbiac, and had spread themselves over Germany from the mouth of the Rhine as far as another great river of that country called the Elbe; indeed it often happened that their dukes advanced as far as the banks of the Meuse, apparently intending to take up the same position in Gaul as the great Salian tribe had formerly occupied near the Yssal.

Try to find out on a map the country that I have described; then nothing will be easier than to retain in your memory the position of these barbarous people, of whom I shall have to say a great deal in the course of this history. Pepin d'Heristal spent many years of his life in fighting against them and resisting their invasions, and was often obliged himself to invade their country in order to bring them into subjection.

[A.D. 691.] The sons of Thierry the Third had lived, like their father, in the obscurity of their palace; the empty honours of royalty had somewhat compensated them for the loss of power, and when Childebert the Third, the last of these princes, died,

Pepin consented to place on the Neustrian throne a shadowy and unreal king who, under the name of Dagobert the Third, had no other merit than that of belonging to the illustrious family of the Merovingians. This prince, who was not more than twelve years old, was entirely submissive to Pepin, whose least wish was in his eyes like the command of a sovereign ; and the ambitious man, who was getting old, felt sure of finding an obedient pupil in the new monarch. Death, however, who comes to the weak and the strong alike, cut short the various plans which he was forming ; and his decease was the signal for a new series of troubles, which hastened the downfall of the Merovingian race.

[A.D. 714.] Pepin, Duke of Austrasia, had married twice, and had by Alpaida a son named Charles, who although quite young, was already remarkable for his courage in war, and was surnamed Martel (the Hammer), to express that he was always ready to beat down his enemies, just as a blacksmith beats the iron upon the anvil.

Plectrude, Pepin's second wife, had also a son, whom she wished to make Duke of Austrasia and Mayor of the Palace, as his father had been before him. But, as the child was very young, his mother was afraid that the Franks would prefer Charles Martel, on account of his superior age and merit ; so she had the brave young man confined in a strong fortress, where she hoped he might soon die of weariness and vexation. In the meantime the Neustrians, indignant that Plectrude should try to impose upon Dagobert a mayor of the palace who was actually not six years old, revolted against her and flew to arms.

[A.D. 715.] After defeating the Austrasians in a bloody battle, they chose for their mayor one of their own chiefs named Raghenfred, pursued the remains of the hostile army to the gates of Metz, and laid waste the whole of Austrasia.

[A.D. 717.] Then the great lords of the kingdom, ashamed of the reverses which the ambition of a proud woman had brought

upon them, remembered Pepin's eldest son, Charles Martel, who had, by an unjust imprisonment, been deprived of the honour of fighting at the head of their army. They hastened to break open the gates of the prison where he was confined, set him at liberty, and proclaimed him Duke of Austrasia. He marched immediately against the Neustrians, entirely defeated their leader Raghenfred, and had himself proclaimed Mayor of the Palace to the conquered Neustrians. The ambitious Plectrude was now in despair ; she felt herself completely in the power of Charles, and was thankful that he consented to forget how she had persecuted him, on condition that she should give up to him her son with all his father's castles and treasures.

About this time a nation called the Saracens crossed the Pyrenees, which separate France from Spain, and devastated a district in the south of Gaul. They then spread themselves like a torrent over the southern provinces, and troops of them appeared in many different places at once, ruin and destruction marking their course through the country. They were a war-like people, originally from Arabia, worshipping the true God, and believing themselves bound by the promise of Mahomet, the founder of their religion, to conquer the world by the power of the sword.

Many Frank lords in the south of Gaul, and amongst them a brave Duke of Aquitaine named Odo or Eudes, tried to defend the country from the attacks of these fearless invaders, but they were defeated so often, that they were obliged to appeal to Charles Martel to help them, and entreat him to save the empire of the Franks from destruction. Charles, having called together the counts and dukes of Austrasia, with large numbers of their soldiers, advanced to meet the Saracens as far as the gates of the ancient city of Poitiers, situated on the other side of the Loire ; and here he gave battle to the Mahometan army. The conflict was so terrible that the earth was covered for miles with

the dead bodies of the enemy, and the water of the rivers ran red with their blood. Abderrahman, the Saracen general, perished with nearly all his army ; and only a wreck of the great host recrossed the Pyrenees into Spain. [A.D. 732.] Many Frank lords and soldiers were killed in the battle, but there was not a single man in Charles's army who would not have chosen death rather than see these ferocious people burn down the cities, devastate the country, sack the churches, and make slaves of the whole population. Nor must we look upon this brilliant victory as upon the many related in history which had no real results ; for Charles Martel's victory at Poitiers really saved Gaul, and it may be Europe, from the yoke of the Saracens, who had just conquered Spain and overthrown the powerful monarchy of the Visigoths in that country.

Without this victory the crescent of the Arab prophet might have everywhere taken the place of the Cross of Christ, and vast nations might have been Mahometan instead of Christian. Hence Charles was justly called the saviour of France, and wherever he passed, the people pressed in throngs to look at him as the most illustrious warrior of his time. While these great events were being accomplished, two Fainéant Kings lived and died in obscurity in their palace without any one taking the least interest in their fate. Their very names were scarcely known to their contemporaries.

[A.D. 715.] Charles Martel liked to make kings, but was by no means anxious to be one himself. So, when the throne of Neustria was vacant by the death of Dagobert the Third, he placed upon it the son of King Childeric the Second, who, you will remember, after the murder of his parents by Bodilo, was hidden by a faithful servant under his cloak and taken to the Abbey of Chelles, where he was brought up under the name of Brother Daniel. He was now forty-three years old, and far more suited to the life of the monastery which he had hitherto led,

than to bear the weight of a crown ; but he was the only one who remained of the family of Clovis old enough to reign, and accordingly is known by the name of Chilperic the Second. When at the point of death, Charles Martel ordered that his two sons, Pepin and Carloman, should succeed him as mayors of the palace, the one in Neustria, the other in Austrasia.

CHAPTER XIV.

PEPIN THE LITTLE.

From A.D. 731 to A.D. 768.

PEPIN was surnamed the Little on account of his short stature ; yet he was so strong and courageous that the sturdiest men of his time would have been afraid to measure their strength against his. In this age, one of the favourite amusements of the Frank kings and their lords, was to watch the combats of animals, the taste for which had no doubt been introduced into Gaul by the Romans, who built there many circuses and arenas intended for the celebration of these sanguinary games. Pepin was one day present, with his court, at the combat between an enormous lion, and a bull of extraordinary strength ; and, as the struggle grew fiercer and fiercer, he enjoyed the sight more and more. At last the lion seizing his adversary by the throat buried his claws in his side, before the bull could turn to attack

him with his long crooked horns. The combat seemed to be drawing to a close, when Pepin, suddenly moved with pity for the bull, which seemed to be giving in, sprang lightly into the arena, in spite of the efforts made by those around him to hold him back, drew his sword, and killed the lion by one blow on its head. So much strength and daring in so small a man struck every one with astonishment, which was not diminished when Pepin turned towards the spectators, and asked in a loud voice, if they thought he was brave enough for a king. No one, as you may imagine, dared to contradict him ; and Pepin, whose great strength was really no very high merit, appeared in all eyes to be a worthy successor of Charles Martel. [A.D. 742.] Yet though he had only to say the word in order to gain the royal title, he contemptuously allowed the crown of Neustria to be placed on the head of a young prince named Childeric the Third, who was then the sole remaining scion of the Merovingian house. The reason for this was that he tenderly loved his brother Carloman, and did not wish to seize upon the throne, before he felt sure that his elevation would not cause him any pain.

Carloman was, like Pepin, a brave warrior, who had often led the Franks across the Rhine to fight against the Bavarians, Saxons, and other German tribes. Such however was his devotion to religion, that he suddenly resolved to resign the sovereignty of Austrasia, which Charles Martel had bequeathed him, and retire to a monastery, in order to give up his life to the service of God. Carloman went to consult the Pope on the subject, who at this time had no power as a temporal prince, although he was the acknowledged head of the Catholic Church ; and obtained from him permission to found upon Mount Soracte near Rome a monastery, where he renounced the grandeur of the world without a regret, and, cutting off his hair with his own hand, entered gladly and freely upon the humble and laborious life of the cloister. As we have spoken of the Pope, I must tell you

how it was that in Charles Martel's time, the Bishop of Rome had formed friendly relations with the Austrasian Franks, whose conversion to Christianity dated as far back as the days of Clovis.

You know that all the German people were idolaters ; and it often happened that Christian priests passed through Austrasia to bear the tidings of the Gospel to these barbarous people, just as in former time good bishops had come to preach to the Gauls. These brave priests, to whom the name of Missionaries was given, because they had received a mission from the Pope to spread the knowledge of the Gospel in the world, preached peace and reconciliation, and invited the people to be baptized and forsake their sins. The Austrasian lords, and more especially Charles Martel, had always received them with kindness, and the Pope remembering this with gratitude, always proved himself a friend of the Austrasian dukes.

[A.D. 752.] Accordingly, when Pepin decided, with the full consent of the whole nation, to assume the title of king, he nevertheless consulted the Bishop of Rome as to the lawfulness of such a step. The Pope's answer was, "that he alone ought to be called a king, who knew how to exercise the royal power." Now you know that during the time of the Rois Fainéants, the Mayors of the Palace really governed the kingdom, and that none of the later Merovingians had exercised any royal authority. Pepin therefore, considering the answer of the Pope a favourable one, proceeded to call together at Soissons the Neustrian, Austrasian, and Burgundian lords, and publicly deposed young Childeric the Third, who was shaved, and condemned to pass the rest of his life in a cloister. Pepin was then acknowledged King of all the Franks by the principal dukes and counts of the kingdom, and also by the bishops of the cities of Gaul.

It was the custom amongst the barbarians, when they made choice of a new monarch, to place him on a large shield or

buckler, raised upon the shoulders of the chiefs, in order that every one might see him clearly. Pepin wished that this ceremony should take place in the city of Soissons, as in the times of the early Merovingian kings ; and to give greater solemnity to the inauguration, he asked Boniface, the most venerable of the German missionaries, to place the crown upon his head, thus consecrating by a religious act the royal power which the nation had awarded him when they raised him upon the shield.

Some time after Pepin had thus become king, the Bishop of Rome arrived in Gaul, his head covered with ashes, and wearing mourning garments, to implore his protection, and to entreat him to deliver the Romans from the power of the Lombards, a people of German origin like the Franks, who had made themselves masters of Italy, and threatened to take Rome from the Pope. This Pope, Stephen the Second, was a good old man, and was received with the respect and kindness which was due to him. Pepin held out to him his hand as a sign of friendship, and asked him, in return for his protection, to grant him the favour of again crowning him and his two sons, with a religious ceremony which consisted of pouring on the king's head consecrated oil, from a shrine or reliquary called the holy *Ampulla*. This ceremony was afterwards called the "Consecration of the King."

[A.D. 755.] The following year, after crossing the Alps with a large army, as Hannibal had done when he marched against the Romans, Pepin completely defeated the King of the Lombards ; but, instead of appropriating the provinces of Italy that he had conquered, he presented them to the Pope, as an endowment for the Church.

The fame of these great achievements spread very soon throughout Europe. Many princes, and amongst them the Emperor of the East, who was then one of the most powerful kings in the world, sent ambassadors to Pepin, bearing magnifi-

cent presents, such as rare and delicious perfumes, cloths of gold and silver, and a great many precious stones. Amongst these presents was an organ, an instrument of music found now in almost every church, but then quite unknown in France, where all who heard it were full of admiration and delight.

CHAPTER XV.

CHARLEMAGNE.

From A.D. 768 to A.D. 814.

THE story of Charlemagne, or Charles the Great, is one of the most interesting in our history.

It is said that his sword was so long and heavy, that no man in our time could be found strong enough to lift it; that his height and size were so great, that the length of his foot has since been called a *king's foot*, and that he was as brave and good as Pepin the Little, whose son he was. If we add to this that he ruled many kingdoms, each as powerful as that of France, you may easily think that such a man can exist only in imagination; and yet the story may be considered, in all its chief points, to be perfectly true and authentic.

[A.D. 768.] When Charlemagne succeeded to the throne after the death of Pepin, he saw himself surrounded by the enemies whom his father and grandfather had found it so difficult to keep

in check. The barbarous tribes of Germany had become bolder and drawn nearer to the banks of the Rhine, which they were ready to cross. The Dukes of the Frisians, Bavarians, and Saxons, once more threatened to invade Gaul, in order to drive out the Franks or reduce them to submission. At the same time the Saracens, who had remained masters of Spain since Charles Martel had driven them out of the south of Gaul, prepared to recross the Pyrenees; and the Lombards, conquered in Italy by Pepin the Little, were ready to take up arms in order to dispossess the Pope of those provinces which the generosity of the Frank kings had given up for the benefit of the Church.

Surrounded by so many foes, the brave Charlemagne undertook to fight against and conquer them all in succession. He first directed his arms against the Saxons, who were his most formidable enemies, and under their leader Witikind renewed the war again and again, in spite of something like twenty defeats.

They were the only German tribe whom the Christian missionaries had not been able to convert, and Boniface, the holy and good bishop who crowned Pepin the Little at Soissons, having, when a very old man, gone amongst them for the second time, was cruelly murdered by these savage people, who were untouched by the sight of such goodness. We may, perhaps, feel some surprise that Boniface and other good men should thus expose themselves to nearly certain death; but we may remember, that they were animated by the same spirit of patience and love as the Apostles of Christ, and that, without any support but firm faith in God, and confidence in the help of his grace, the devoted missionaries succeeded in time in converting to Christianity the whole of Europe.

Charlemagne, weary of fighting against the Saxons and of ceaseless contests with the people of Germany, at last occupied the country permanently and carried away a large number of the inhabitants to the interior of Gaul, where he obliged them to

settle with **their** wives and children. In order to be better able to keep them in subjection, he built, not far from the Rhine, in a place where there were springs of hot mineral waters formerly much resorted to by the Romans, a city which he called Aix-la-Chapelle. Here he finally established the capital of his vast empire, and spent what time he had to spare from the distant wars in which he was constantly engaged. We may observe, that hitherto the kings of the Frank people had always made their capital at Metz, Paris, Rheims, Soissons, or Orleans, (all places situated between the Meuse and the Loire,) and that Charlemagne was the first to abandon Central Gaul, in order to draw nearer Germany.

[A.D. 774.] Charlemagne next passed, like his father, into Italy, where the Lombards submitted to his power after many years' resistance; but, instead of following Pepin's example in giving away the provinces which he had conquered from barbarous tribes, he placed upon his own head the iron crown of Lombardy. He then proceeded to drive the Saracens out of Gaul; afterwards [A.D. 778] crossing the Pyrenees and taking possession of one of the Spanish provinces which they had occupied, now called Catalonia.

[A.D. 800.] Charlemagne thus found himself the most powerful monarch in the world, as he was master of Gaul, a great part of Italy, Germany as far as the Elbè, and the extensive region of Spain which is separated by the river Ebro from the rest of that peninsula. On Christmas Day, A.D. 800, his grandeur seemed to reach its highest point; for Pope Leo III., while the King was kneeling at his prayers, covered his shoulders with a splendid purple mantle, and then and there gave him the imposing title of Emperor of the West; a title which the successors of Cæsar had borne since the division of the Roman Empire under Constantine the Great.

It is pleasant to know that, in the midst of so much earthly

honour and prosperity, Charlemagne did not forget that God had given him so much power in order that he might ensure the happiness of his people. In the spring and autumn of every year he called together an assembly of bishops, Frank lords, and heads of the nations whom he had united under his empire, and with their assistance and consent made and published a code of laws which, under the name of *Capitularies*, were observed in France for many centuries. At the same time, in order to be sure that the dukes and counts faithfully fulfilled his wishes and commands, he commissioned officers, called *Missi Dominici* (King's Messengers), to give him an account of all that came to their knowledge in passing through the various provinces. The days were far too short for Charlemagne to accomplish all he wished ; he would work with his secretaries every night, and the dawn had often appeared before he thought of rest. In his time, as in the days of Dagobert the First, very few people knew how to read or write. The Frank lords for the most part knew how to handle a sword, and manage a fiery war-horse ; but they set no value on any other kind of knowledge, thinking it as useless for them as for those whom they conquered. There were very few amongst them who had a notion that brute force ought to give place to intellectual and mental power ; and Charlemagne, whose genius was far in advance of his age, did his utmost to dispel this ignorance by inviting to his court learned men from various countries, whom he employed to propagate amongst the Franks those sciences with which they were familiar. The Emperor often desired them to come and live with him in his own palace, and delighted to share their labours with them. The honourable reception which he gave to these men became, it is said, the origin of the University of France, a famous college which for many centuries has been devoted to the instruction of the young, and of which this great prince may be regarded as the founder.

So you see that it was not only by military exploits and glorious conquests that Charlemagne endeavoured to establish his power ; he wished also to contribute to the happiness and welfare of his people, by spreading amongst them the knowledge of which the Franks, up to this time, were entirely ignorant.



CHARLEMAGNE AND ALCUIN.

Chief among the learned men of Charlemagne's court was the English Alcuin, born at York, A.D. 755. His letters still remain to instruct us as to the character of the times in which he lived. In them we find him recommending his master to be merciful to

the conquered Saxons, to send kind-hearted missionaries among them, and to excuse them from heavy taxation. In other letters he comforts Charlemagne for the loss of his wife and of other members of his family, or entreats him to take care of his own health in some of his dangerous expeditions. Others again are on astronomical subjects, sometimes replying to questions proposed by the Emperor himself about the "course of the sun and stars." He himself pursued the study of astronomy with great zeal, and was indefatigable in the collection of valuable manuscripts.

For the greater part of his life he was employed by Charlemagne in all kinds of important business; but at the age of sixty he obtained permission to retire, and persisted in his resolution in spite of the Emperor's remonstrances to him for preferring the smoky roofs of Tours to the gilded palaces of the Romans. Nor would he even retain possession of the splendid and wealthy Abbey of Tours, which Charlemagne had bestowed on him; but divested himself of everything in order to spend his last days in perfect simplicity and devotion. Such was the noble character of an eminent Churchman of the eighth century.

The whole of the known world now heard of Charlemagne's fame; and one of the greatest princes of Asia, called Haroun-al-Raschid, who bore the title of Caliph of Bagdad, sent ambassadors to him, as the Emperor of the East had done to Pepin, bearing magnificent presents of precious stones, and stuffs and silks embroidered with gold and silver, with the exquisite perfumes of of Arabia. But the present which most astounded and delighted Charlemagne and his court was a clock which struck the hours, (an unheard-of thing at this time,) and in which, when the last stroke of twelve sounded, twelve knights, armed from head to foot, opened as many little doors, and defiled before the eyes of the delighted spectators.

[A.D. 814.] Charlemagne, after a life filled with glory and

honour, died at an advanced age in the city of Aix-la-Chapelle, of which he was the founder. A basilica which had been built in honour of the Virgin Mary was chosen for his tomb. It was in one of the vaults of this monument that the body of Charlemagne was placed, seated, it is said, upon a marble throne and clothed in his emperor's robes, his head encircled with a crown, and the golden sceptre which had been given him by the Pope Leo III. lying at his feet. His long heavy sword was fastened to his side, and on his knees was placed the book of the four gospels, which he always used. Nothing was wanting to complete the magnificence of the tomb. The vault was paved with gold, and the great bronze gate of the monument was strongly soldered into the wall, as if to hide from the generations to come the nothingness of all earthly power.

The princes of Charlemagne's family who reigned after him, are usually called Carlovingians or Karolings, which signifies 'Sons of Charlemagne;' and, indeed, this great prince well deserved that his name should be held in honour to all posterity.

For the better understanding of the history which follows, I hope you will trace on the map what was the extent of Charlemagne's empire, and what countries were contained in it, from the Elbe in Germany as far as the Ebro in Spain. It is very important to gain a clear idea about this, as the principal kingdoms which exist in Europe at the present day were, after his death, formed out of the wreck of his vast empire.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE VALLEY OF RONCEVALLES.

About the year A.D. 778.

THE Emperor Charlemagne, who was always glad to receive in his palace at Aix-la-Chapelle learned men from every country, had also gathered round him the bravest warriors of his time, whom he called '*Preux*'—that, is his 'knights of proof'—because he had proved their courage and devotion to his service in many battles.

These knights were ever ready to fight in the cause of the widow and orphan, and to protect the poor and the servants of the Church. Never did they refuse to help those who came to them in distress; and they might be seen hastening from one country to another to fight against wicked men and robbers, as in earlier times the heroes of the old Greeks vowed to destroy monsters and cruel brigands who infested their country. Among all Charlemagne's knights his own nephew, Roland, was the most distinguished. He was foremost in all the victories gained over the enemies of France; he punished the powerful men who had done wicked things—such as seizing and killing travellers who passed through their domains, and then appropriating their property—or, perhaps, had carried off by treachery defenceless young girls and kept them by force in their castles. The very sight of Roland alarmed all whose consciences reproached them with any deed of violence, for they knew that his sword was ready to punish them, and to redress the wrongs they had done.

It is said, that when the Saxons and Lombards, or other enemies of the great Emperor, discovered him in a battle, they instantly took to flight, crying out, "We have seen Roland."

One day as this brave captain was returning to **Charlemagne**, after having defeated the Saracens in many battles, he found himself closely pursued by a little band of horsemen in a narrow



ROLAND'S HORN.

pass called the Valley of **Roncevalles**, which is in the Pyrenees, between Spain and France. Here he suddenly found the hills on both sides occupied by numbers of Saracens, who began throwing down from all sides enormous fragments of rock, which tore up and shattered to pieces large trees as they fell. All Roland's

companions in arms perished one after another beneath the shower. Soon the chief remained alone ; but suddenly remembering the horn with which he was accustomed to call his brethren in arms **round** him, he placed it to his lips, and drew from it a note so shrill and **piercing** that the echoes of the valley repeated it a thousand times. The sound which had so often struck the Saracens with terror in their defeats, now created such a panic that they fled in utter confusion. But Roland was already dead ; for as he blew his closing blast, he had been struck down by the last volley of rocks which the enemy had ventured to roll down the precipice. Such is the form given in legends to a real defeat sustained by the forces of Charlemagne in the Pyrenean passes. It is further commemorated by 'Roland's Grave,' a heap of huge blocks of stone in the pass of Roncevalles ; by an ancient poem of great beauty which tells of the storm and earthquake felt "from Paris to Sens, and from Besançon to Wissant" at the moment when Roland fell ; and by a more recent French song which attributes to this ancient warrior the peculiar mixture of bravery and recklessness which marked the French soldiers of the 17th century.

CHAPTER XVII.

LOUIS LE DEBONNAIRE.

From A.D. 814 to A.D. 843.

MANY kings of France have borne the name of Louis, but the greater part of them have had surnames, by which they may be easily distinguished from each other ; Charlemagne's son was the first king of this name, and he is commonly called Louis the Debonnaire, which means 'gentle,' and 'peaceable.'

[A.D. 817.] After Charlemagne's death, Louis the First, who during the life of his father had borne the title of King of Aquitaine, was proclaimed Emperor of the West and King of the Franks, as Charles had been. The reigning Pope, Stephen the Fourth, came to Rheims to consecrate Louis in the same cathedral where Clovis had in former times been baptized. Louis had a nephew named Bernard, King of Italy, on whom his grandfather, Charlemagne, had bestowed, before his death, the iron crown of Lombardy. This young prince was so foolish as to quarrel with his uncle, and even to declare war against him ; his army was, however, beaten by that of Louis, and his soldiers seized upon Bernard, and made him close prisoner.

Although in most things throughout his life Louis the First really deserved his surname of Debonnaire, yet when he was deeply offended nothing could disarm his resentment. He now proved himself insensible to the bitter regret Bernard showed for the fault he had committed in making war upon him, and by his order his nephew was summoned before an assembly of Frank

lords, who condemned him to have his eyes put out. When the unhappy man heard the dreadful punishment which awaited him, he exclaimed that he far preferred instant death to such torture ; and, snatching a sword from the hands of a soldier, he killed with his own hand five of his executioners. But this desperate struggle did not give him a chance of escape ; overwhelmed by numbers, he was easily disarmed, and suffered tortures which ended his life in a few days. Scarcely had this terrible deed of vengeance been accomplished, when Louis seemed to awake to a sense of the enormity of the crime which had been committed. He was filled with the most violent remorse, which can only be compared to that which Clotaire felt after the murder of his son Chramnes, and his life became a burden to him. He was now seen with ashes on his head, clothed in a coarse garment, such as was worn by the greatest criminals when the Church condemned them to a public penance ; and he prostrated himself before an assembly of bishops and Frank lords at Attigny near Soissons, humbly entreating to be admitted to penance for the sin which he had committed against God and man by the murder of the unhappy Bernard. But God had reserved for him a terrible punishment ; namely, that he should find in his own children his bitterest enemies.

There was, as you know, a great variety amongst the subjects of the Western Empire ; Charlemagne had united under his sceptre Spaniards, Saxons, Bavarians, Italians, Franks, Gauls, and Frisians, men of different races, and separated from each other by language and customs as well as by the countries in which they lived. These nations began very soon to feel that they could not submit to the common rule, and accordingly they only waited for a favourable opportunity to assert their independence.

Louis le Debonnaire, who had three sons, all of whom were grown up, now wished to reign only over the Franks, and resolved to give up, in his lifetime, the imperial power to Lothaire,

brothers, as they had been bad sons. Pepin of Aquitaine died just before his father, and his kingdom became extinct. Lothaire, having resumed the imperial dignity, pretended that kings must always submit to emperors, and tried in vain to force his brothers to obey him ; but they defeated him completely at a place called Fontenay, and he was obliged to conclude with them a peace known as the Treaty of Verdun, which reduced him to the possession of Italy only, joining to it a little province of France, then called Lotharingia or Lothaire's land ; whence its modern name of Lorraine. By this celebrated treaty, Germany fell to the share of Louis of Bavaria ; who was for this reason called the German, and separated himself definitely from the empire founded by Charlemagne, while Charles the Bald retained the kingdom of France, assigned to him by Louis le Debonnaire.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE FORTIFIED CASTLES.

From A.D. 843 to A.D. 877.

CHARLES THE BALD was now reigning in France ; and on the death of his brother Lothaire he was allowed to take the title of Emperor of the West, which conferred upon him the sovereignty of Italy and Lorraine.

[A.D. 843.] Some barbarous people, hitherto unknown, now appeared in ships at the mouths of the Rhine and the Seine, and landed in great numbers, committing the most fearful ravages in the surrounding country. The lands of the Frisians and the Neustrians were the first to suffer from the devastations of these barbarians, who destroyed without mercy all that they could not carry away with them, and to whom the name of Normans was given, to show that they had come from the north. They successively invaded the other provinces of Gaul, where they were favoured by the quarrels of the princes ; carrying slaughter and devastation into the country districts, though they dared not attack the cities. Ever since the time when Clovis had led the Franks into Gaul, the greater part of the nobles of that nation, accustomed to an active adventurous life, preferred establishing themselves in the country districts, in the midst of their serfs and dependants, who cultivated their lands, rather than inhabit the towns, which they looked upon as prisons. The houses in which they lived, and where they often gathered together a certain number of servants and old companions in

arms, had been a sufficient refuge from plunder during the wars which the Franks were constantly making amongst themselves. But when the Normans arrived, such gates and walls were found not nearly strong enough to resist such formidable enemies ; and every one began to surround his dwelling with a deep ditch or moat, and to build round it very thick walls, surmounted by high towers, from whence any one approaching might be seen at a great distance.

Nothing could be more gloomy than the appearance of these manorial dwellings, which could only be entered by a drawbridge—that is, a moveable bridge of wood strengthened with iron, which could be raised or let down at pleasure. The light of day could hardly penetrate to the inhabitants of these dark retreats through the dormer windows pierced in the thick walls or at the top of the towers. On all sides were strong gratings of iron, like the windows of a prison. The only place in them for air and exercise was the platform of the ramparts, which was always full of warlike engines.

Strong castles of this kind became general in France in the reign of Charles the Bald ; even the monasteries were surrounded with walls and moats, the inhabitants not feeling themselves safe from robbers without this protection ; and it seemed that the whole Frank nation were condemned to the most rigorous captivity, when their dwellings were seen thus fortified and made impenetrable. Yet these fortresses, instead of creating any fear amongst the brigands, only increased their numbers.

For many Frank lords, who found their life in their castles monotonous and dull, did not find it compensate them for the expense of warfare in times of trouble ; and therefore took up, from time to time, their old trade of plundering travellers and merchants on the roads.

Sometimes they dragged the poor people into their fortresses, and threw them into dungeons, keeping them there till a large

ransom was paid for their release. No one had the power to prevent or punish these deeds of violence, because Charles the Bald was far too much occupied with his own affairs to think of defending the life and liberty of these poor people, who really could not set out on any journey without first commending their souls to God as a preparation for death. At last the complaints against the building of fortresses, the number of which was increasing daily, became so general in the kingdom, that Charles was obliged to issue a special Capitulary that all those raised without his permission should be demolished, and that no more should be built. But no one took any heed of the orders of a sovereign who was not powerful enough to enforce them or make them respected; such, indeed, was his weakness, that all his efforts could not prevent the Normans from coming up the rivers in their ships, and making the country bordering on them the scene of perpetual devastation.

Then the counts and dukes, who, you will remember, were originally simple officers whom the kings sent into the provinces to rule in their name, ceasing to have any fear of the prince who had trusted his authority to them, took the opportunity of setting themselves up in their turn as powerful lords. They built strong castles for themselves, and when Charles sent them an order to demolish them, they laughed at his capitulary, answered that they were the sole masters of the provinces he had given them, and obliged him to secure their manorial rights to their sons who should come after them as their lawful inheritance.

Charles was too weak to be able to resist these outrages of his subjects, and therefore gave way to them; and the consequence was, that in a few years France was shared by a multitude of dukes, counts, and *marquises* (the last word meaning lords of the 'marches' or frontier), who were really more masters of the kingdom than the king himself.

One of the most powerful lords of these times was a celebrated

captain named Robert, surnamed the Strong, on account of his courage and ability. Charles, hoping to find a support in this brave man, made him Count of Paris and of Anjou—one of the provinces most exposed to the ravages of the Normans, whose long boats were daily seen coming up the Loire ; but after having nobly defended his territory for many years against these barbarians, Robert the Strong perished in a battle on the banks of the river, and the Northmen spread themselves over the neighbouring country without opposition.

All this time the poor people were suffering most terribly : for the Normans, not being able to scale the inaccessible fortresses, where the lords had entrenched themselves, revenged themselves upon the cottages of the peasants, which they burnt to the ground, after killing all the cattle and carrying off everything they could lay hands on. There was scarcely a church or a monastery which did not become the prey of these people, who, hating Christianity, had no respect for consecrated places, and plundered them without mercy of all the silver and gold that they could find. Monasteries and churches were the receptacles of a great many relics of saints, which were at that time held in great veneration by the Church, and were often preserved in splendid shrines, ornamented with gold and precious stones. The Normans, knowing this, did not fail to seize the reliquaries and shatter them to pieces : and very often the poor monks had no time to fly from their assailants, but were massacred by these barbarians, who did not even spare women and children.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE SIEGE OF PARIS.

From A.D. 877 to A.D. 888.

THERE is very little to say about Louis the Second, called the Stammerer, because he had a great impediment in his speech.

He was the son of Charles the Bald, and ascended the throne on the death of his father, but did not possess Italy, which had been seized by the son of Louis the German.

He only reigned two years, and died while yet very young, leaving three sons who were all three Kings of France ; and of them we shall speak in succession.

Louis the Third and Carloman were the eldest sons of Louis the Stammerer ; they were bound together by the strongest affection, and in good and evil fortune were always inseparable. They did not hope to reclaim the provinces which the counts and lords had taken from their predecessors, but divided the rest of the kingdom between them ; Louis took possession of Neustria, and Carloman assumed the title of King of Aquitaine. Never perhaps in the history of France have the people been so miserable as at this time. While the Normans were spreading their ravages on all sides, depopulating the country and leaving as they went neither castles nor villages nor monasteries, the descendants of Charlemagne were obliged to march sword in hand, in order to win respect from the rebellious lords, who disputed with them the fragments of their inheritance.

The most touching affection existed between these two princes,

who never for a moment felt any jealousy of each other ; a fault which, always great, is doubly odious between two brothers, whose duty it is to share everything without any dispute or regret. When they were engaged in war together, they tried to guard each other from exposure to the enemy, and their greatest pleasure was to confide to one another their most secret thoughts. It seems to us that such princes were only suited to a happier age and time ; in fact their lives were but short, for Louis the Third died of a fall from an unmanageable horse, which fractured his skull ; and his brother Carloman was so overcome with grief at his loss, that, when the lords of Neustria called upon him to receive his inheritance and help them against the Normans, whose ravages threatened not to leave one stone of their towns upon another, he listened to their requests as if they did not concern him. Indeed, since his brother's death he had become indifferent to any personal danger, whether in war or in the chase, and it seemed as if life had no longer any charm for him. Soon after this, as his dogs were attacking a ferocious wild boar, the young King threw himself before the animal, and was killed on the spot. The death of these two good young princes was universally lamented ; they were laid in the same grave, and, as they had been united by the tenderest tie of brotherly love in life, so in death they were not divided.

The lords of Neustria and Aquitaine now offered the sovereignty of the two kingdoms to Charles, an uncle of the young kings. This prince was the youngest son of Louis the German, of whom we have read in the history of Louis le Debonnaire. He already reigned over Germany and Italy, and now finding himself master of nearly all the possessions of Charlemagne, he took like him the title of Emperor of the West.

Charles le Gros, so called on account of his enormous size, brought on, it is said, by a gluttony which can only be compared to that of the Roman Emperor Vitellius, was not of a warlike dis-

position. The shortness of his stature and his ungraceful form, gave him a very undignified appearance, and unhappily he was as deficient in moral as in bodily energy.

Thus he assembled a large army to march against the Normans, but at the approach of the enemy his courage failed him, and he gave up to the invaders without any resistance the country of which they wished to take possession. The Normans finding no obstacle in their way, turned towards Paris, where they rightly supposed they should find much treasure and many churches to plunder.

Already from the ramparts of Paris, which was then entirely enclosed, as you know, in the little island we now call the Cité, the inhabitants saw in the distance the smoke of burning villages, and the waters of the Seine washed up the dead bodies which the Normans had thrown into the river. Struck with consternation, they were preparing to die, for it seemed as if they were forsaken by God and man; Count Odo, however, the eldest son of Robert the Strong, resolved to defend the walls to the last extremity. Not allowing himself to be frightened by the demonstrations of the Normans, who tried in vain to scale the walls with loud and savage yells, he distributed arms to all the inhabitants without any distinction of age or sex, and held the city against these formidable conquerors for two years. Of course a multitude of Parisians were killed in the struggle, and a very large number perished of hunger and misery in the streets of the city; but any one would rather a hundred times have died, than have fallen into the power of the Normans, who were sure either to enslave or torture them.

At last the Emperor Charles le Gros, ashamed to leave this brave people so long exposed to such calamities, put himself at the head of a new army, collected from Austrasia, Neustria, and even from Germany (all these countries having suffered in turn from the ravages of the Normans), and marched to the help of

Count Odo. As very many of the best soldiers amongst the Normans had perished in the fight, and the Parisians, though reduced to the most terrible distress, still continued to oppose them with the courage of despair, they had made up their mind to retreat on hearing that the Emperor's army was drawing near; indeed, no one doubted that the moment was come when Charles would deliver the kingdom from these terrible invaders. But the King's shameful cowardice soon disappointed all such expectations. When he saw the heights of Montmartre, which overlook Paris, covered with the Norman lances, he shrank from risking the chances of a battle, which all his army demanded with loud cries; and actually made a secret offer of a large sum of money to the leader of the barbarian troops, by way of bribe to take his soldiers out of the country. The Normans very gladly accepted these proposals, and withdrew, filled with contempt for the cowardly prince, who had chosen rather to give up his treasures than to meet them in an honourable engagement.

[A.D. 888.] The brave nation of the Franks were indignant to see their adversaries thus rewarded, instead of being gloriously defeated in battle. The lords who had taken up arms declared with one voice that they could no longer render obedience to a prince who showed himself so unworthy to command brave men; and Charles having sought refuge in Germany, where he flattered himself that the fame of his cowardice might not have preceded him, his subjects took from him the title of Emperor, and shut him up in an abbey in that country, where he died in the following year, strangled, it is said, by his own servants.

With Charles le Gros the Empire of the West founded by Charlemagne came to an end. Out of it were formed the seven kingdoms of Italy, Germany, Lorraine, Burgundy, Provence, Navarre, and France, without counting a large number of independent lordships which it would take too long to mention here. You must learn to find on the map, the precise position of these

seven provinces, and remember that from this epoch may be dated the origin of the great kingdoms which now exist in that part of Europe.

Some years after the siege of Paris, one of the successors of Charles le Gros yielded to the Normans, in order to put a stop to their continual ravages, a beautiful maritime province where they established themselves, and which took from them the name of Normandy. This people then became French like the inhabitants of other parts of the kingdom ; yet for a long time there were Frenchmen who kept up the practice of asking God in their daily prayers to preserve them from the fury of the Normans.

CHAPTER XX.

FEUDALISM.

From A.D. 888 to A.D. 923.

As this is the history, not only of the Kings of France, but of the French people also, we ought to know what was the inner history of the country after the fall of the Western Empire, and the origin of the 'feudal system,' which had such an important influence on their welfare.

In a former chapter we learned what circumstances led to the erection of the strong castles which suddenly rose up over the face of the whole country, and in which the Frank lords, the abbots of monasteries, and even the bishops, sheltered themselves from the ravages of the Normans and other adventurers. But there were other people in Gaul besides lords and bishops ; and not every one was rich enough to build a strongly fortified castle and retire therein with his family. The poorer classes, especially the peasants, were exposed to all the fury of the Normans ; and as neither king, prince, duke, nor count would take pity on them, these unhappy people saw themselves abandoned without help to all the terrible scourges which war brings in its train.

In spite of the ramparts which protected them and their servants, the nobles would soon have found themselves in great difficulty if they had allowed the peasants who supported them by the cultivation of their fields to perish under their castle walls.

All had a common danger to meet, and a mutual help to

render. Protection on the one side, was to be recompensed by service and labour on the other ; and the arrangement, apart from abuses, was far from being unsatisfactory. The practical working of it was as follows. The lords said to the peasants, " If you consent to cultivate the fields lying round our castles, and to



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give us every year a part of your harvest, then, if the Normans approach, we will give you permission to take refuge behind our walls, with your wives and children, your flocks and herds, and all that you can bring with you. We will give you justice, when you come to ask for it, and we will rebuild your houses when they have been burned down. But then, in return, when we go to

war you will be obliged to follow us with your arms for forty days. You cannot be allowed without our authority to take up your abode, or even marry a wife, upon the land of another lord. You will be our property, you and your children, your ploughs, your cattle, and your houses ; you will have to grind your corn at our mills, and to bake your bread in an oven which belongs to us. Lastly, we shall have the power of selling you with the land you cultivate, though not without it, and you shall be called our Serfs, that is our slaves under another name."

The poor people were so miserable at this time, that they willingly accepted the propositions of their powerful neighbours, and the population of Gaul soon came to consist of masters and serfs. But some of the dukes, counts, abbots, and lords of the strong castles were found to be superior to others, because they owned a greater number of serfs, or perhaps because their castles were more strongly fortified. Then the stronger said to the weaker :

"If you will render us homage or service for your land, that is to say, promise to be faithful to us, and not to dispose of your own castles or of your children without our leave, and if you will pledge yourselves to follow us to war, with all the serfs in your territory, whenever we summon you, then we will grant you protection against your enemies, we will do all we can to prevent the demolition of your fortifications and the destruction of your property, we will give you justice when you ask for it, and we will declare ourselves to be your Suzerains, or Lords Paramount, and you shall be our Lieges or Vassals."

These terms were also accepted ; so that France was covered with lordships, the possessors of which were liegemen to feudal superiors. The lands which were subjected to this form of government received the name of Fiefs, and this particular order of things was called the feudal system.

In order to increase the number of their vassals, the greater

part of the lords subdivided their domains into a multitude of small fiefs, obliging the families of those who accepted them to fulfil the conditions of the feudal system. But it was the poor man upon whom the weight of this form of government fell so heavily. It was he who had to fight when the lords quarrelled amongst themselves ; it was he who built the massive fortresses, which were afterwards made use of to enforce obedience ; it was he who watered with the sweat of his brow the harvest which belonged chiefly to his master ; and it was his blood which flowed freely on the battle-field, where he was dragged at the will of his lord.

The horror of the miserable condition of the serfs was increased by the cruelty of many of the lords, who were almost entirely ignorant of the first duties of religion and humanity. They were subjected to the most barbarous treatment from their cruel masters. The least fault exposed them to dreadful punishments, such as the loss of an arm, a hand, or a leg ; or they were deprived of sight, flogged to death, or condemned to breathe out their last sigh in the darkness of a dungeon, whose doors closed on them for ever. The serfs in many provinces of the kingdom were made to beat the water of the moats round the castles all night, in order to prevent the frogs from disturbing the sleep of the lord by their croaking ; in others they were forbidden to kill an ox or a pig for food, without bringing to their master the feet and tongue of the animal. Throughout France the first-fruits of the harvest or vintage were the property of the lords, who also claimed the absolute right of disposing of the property of their serfs, as well as of their persons !

Yet we must not confuse the serfs under the feudal system with the slaves formerly bought and sold in the public markets, who were often prisoners of war. The number of these slaves had considerably diminished in Gaul since the conversion of the barbarians to Christianity ; moreover, they were mostly

servants in houses, whilst the serfs belonged to the land upon which they were born, and were commonly looked upon as 'bound to the soil,' that is to say, to the field which they were obliged to cultivate.

[A.D. 888.] Charles le Gros had scarcely breathed his last, when a number of lords raised to the throne of France the brave Count Odo, who was one of themselves, and had, as you will remember, gallantly defended Paris against the Normans. He did not belong to the family of the Karolings, and for that reason many of the dukes and counts on the further side of the Loire, and even many of the Neustrian nobles, refused to obey him; but, as he possessed a large number of fortified castles and very extensive domains, and as a bishop placed the crown upon his head, he is usually placed in the list of Kings of France for the ten years which followed his accession till his death. When this happened, the Neustrian lords who had refused to submit themselves to him, suddenly remembered that a prince of Charlemagne's family was still living, and proclaimed him King of France, under the name of Charles the Third.

[A.D. 912.] Charles the Third was the youngest brother of Louis the Third and Carloman; and it was he who put a stop to the ravages of the Normans by ceding to them the beautiful province to which they have given their name, and which then formed a part of the country of the Bretons. Rollo, Duke of the Normans, after he had been baptized, acknowledged the King of the Franks as his Suzerain. It was the custom in these cases to observe certain ceremonies, to which the proud Norman chief found it very hard to submit. First the vassal was obliged to place both his hands in those of his lord, in token that he would not henceforth use his strength without his permission. Rollo at once made a great difficulty about consenting to this arrangement; but it was still worse when he heard that, as a sign of submission, he must bend his knee before the French

king and kiss his foot! To so humiliating a ceremony he absolutely refused to submit; and all that could be wrung from him was a permission that one of his officers should go through the formality in his stead. For this purpose he chose from amongst his followers a Norman, whose height was extraordinary, and his manners so insolent, that instead of stooping to the foot, he roughly seized the king's leg and lifted it so far from the ground that Charles was thrown down. This fall, happening on such a solemn occasion, was considered to be a fatal omen; and it was soon proved to be so, for the king's fate was one of the saddest that can be imagined. For the Neustrian lords who had called Charles to the throne very soon discovered the weakness of his character, and openly declared against him, breaking in his presence some wisps of straw, to show they had renounced for ever their allegiance to a monarch whom they could not respect. It was then that Charles, who had not power to make these men return to their duty, received the name of Simple, by which he is yet remembered, and which expresses his feeble character. Shortly after this event this unfortunate prince lost all his possessions except the single town of Laon, and fell into the power of his enemies, who condemned him to pass the rest of his life in prison. The rebellious lords had also intended to seize Edgitha,* the wife of the royal captive, and her son Louis, who was then only three years old; but this princess, who was a daughter of the King of England, being aware of their design, found means to embark upon a ship bound for England, and she and her little son found a refuge there from the snares of their enemies.

Meanwhile the French lords, who began to adopt the custom of making and unmaking their kings, conducted a brother of Odo to Rheims Cathedral, and obliged the Bishop of that town to

* Daughter of Edward, the son of Alfred the Great.

confer upon him the holy unction, under the title of Robert the First. [A.D. 923.] But this prince did not long enjoy his elevation to the throne ; as he perished before the walls of Soissons in a pitched battle against the partizans of Charles the Simple, who, though delivered for a moment from captivity by this event, did not end his days in liberty. For by another turn of fortune he fell almost immediately afterwards into the hands of his enemies, and died the following year, at the Castle of Peronne in Picardy.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE LAST OF THE KAROLINGS.

From A.D. 923 to A.D. 987.

DURING the troubles which followed the disastrous reign of Louis le Debonnaire, the Franks, the Burgundians, the Gauls, the Visigoths, and all the other tribes which had so long inhabited Gaul, ceased to be distinguished by their particular names, in order that they might form a single people, to whom the common name of French was given and remains to this day ; from this time therefore, we shall use the word France instead of Gaul in speaking of the country. Already from one end of it to the other one language was spoken, called the *Langue Romane*, formed by a mixture of Latin with the Teutonic of the barbarians. This circumstance you should carefully remark ; because

it is this 'Romance' language which has come down to our own time, and which is now written and spoken in France.

It was in the province of Neustria, where the Franks were the most numerous, that the French language first had its birth ; but insensibly it spread throughout the provinces of Gaul, except Brittany, whose inhabitants still preserve the ancient Celtic language. However, even under the last of the Karolings the new speech had not been adopted by all the individuals of the French nation ; for the princes of the royal house obstinately used the German language, and the bishops Latin. [A.D. 923.] While Charles the Simple was languishing in the castle of Peronne, the most powerful lords—chief among whom was Hugh, surnamed the White, Count of Paris, and Duke of France, son of Robert the First, and possessor of a large number of considerable fiefs—judged it expedient to call to the throne one of the lords named Raoul, Duke of Burgundy, who had married a granddaughter of Robert the Strong. Raoul was not one of the family of the Karolings, but it was precisely for that reason that the French lords called him to the throne. For from the time they had perceived that the descendants of Charlemagne affected to preserve the barbarous language, the new nation looked upon them with distrust, and reproached them with regarding themselves as German rather than French princes.

Raoul was religious, good, and generous ; and, being quite satisfied with his position as one of the most powerful nobles in France, he had no ambition to wear the crown, which had caused so much unhappiness to many others ; but he yielded at last to the entreaties of his brother-in-law, Hugh the White, and accepted the kingly power. Hugh the White was so called on account of the colour of the armour which he wore in battle, that his companions in arms might be able to distinguish him amongst the combatants.

[A.D. 936.] Raoul, who only reigned a few years, died without children, and the French lords then thought that Hugh would in

Indeed, the cause of his hasty retreat was soon discovered to be the approach of Lothaire and Hugh Capet, who, having united their armies, were steadily advancing to try the chances of a battle. The German prince had scarcely time to retreat, and a few days later was completely defeated at the ford of the river Aisne near Soissons, owing his safety to a truce granted by Lothaire, who did not wish to take his cousin's life.

[A.D. 986.] Lothaire's clemency, however, enraged the French lords, who reproached him, as they had reproached his father and his grandfather, with being more German than French. Some of them who had remained faithful to him up to this moment, now turned towards Hugh Capet, and it was easy to foresee that the dynasty of the Karolings was near its end. Louis did not long survive the general discontent of the nation, and when he died, poisoned it is said, by his wife, Queen Emma, very few people regretted him.

His son, Louis the Fifth, surnamed the Indolent, because he was infirm both in body and mind, succeeded him on the throne ; but he died after a reign of two years, and with him the illustrious dynasty of which Charlemagne was the founder became extinct.

CHAPTER XXII.

EXCOMMUNICATION.

From A.D. 987 to A.D. 1031.

As we look back on the history of this time, we might imagine that the extinction of the family of the Karolings in France would produce a great sensation amongst the feudal lords, who had divided the provinces of the kingdom between them under the later reigns of that house.

But it was not so ; each lord, secluded in his own castle, or shut up in his own town, took little or no interest in the destiny of a throne from which he expected neither good nor harm ; and though some pity was excited by the fate of that family whose founders had reigned so gloriously in former times over the French nation, there was not a single lord who attempted to take up arms in favour of Prince Charles, inasmuch as he was reproached most justly with having tempted the army of the King of Germany into the very heart of the kingdom.

Circumstances seemed to favour Hugh Capet's taking upon himself the title of King ; accordingly, after having summoned an assembly of the chief lords of ancient Neustria, with the help of the Dukes of Burgundy and Normandy, who were his relations and friends, he was consecrated at Rheims by the bishop of that city, with all the ceremony which had been observed from the earliest times of the monarchy. Thus it was that the descendant of Robert the Strong was called to occupy the throne of Charlemagne to the exclusion of the last representatives of that

great prince's family, and that Hugh Capet became the founder of the dynasty of French kings to which the name of Capetian is given. The royal title, which the Count of Paris had just taken, added nothing to the power which he had so long enjoyed ; for his kingdom was confined to the Duchy of France, and the other dominions received from his father. If you look at a map of the country at this period, you will see that the possessions of the new king were entirely comprised between the Meuse and the Loire, and were limited on every side by the Duchies of Burgundy, Normandy, and Bretagne, whose possessors had, however, consented to be liegemen to the king, or, as they were afterwards called, *Great Feudatories of the Crown*. But Hugh Capet really belonged to the new French race ; he possessed many strong castles, a crowd of lords acknowledged themselves his vassals, and, above all, no one was ignorant of his energetic character.

During this time Prince Charles, pretending that the crown of France belonged to him after the death of his nephew Louis the Indolent, found means to enter the city of Laon, which appeared destined as a prison for his family ; and, having gathered a small number of followers, he flattered himself that the French lords would come and rally round him, as the last representative of the Carlovingian race. But this hope was cruelly disappointed ; for Hugh Capet, at the head of an army, assaulted the place with deadly violence, and the last resources of Charles's party were exhausted.

One of the sad truths which history teaches us is, that unfortunate princes rarely keep their friends, and that it often happens that their own servants, not content with abandoning them, are the first to betray them. This is precisely what happened to Charles ; he had placed entire confidence in Adalbéron, Bishop of Laon, and was cruelly deceived by this prelate, who made a secret offer to Hugh Capet to open to him the gates of the city. The king received the proposition with delight, in spite of

the contempt with which such an action inspired him ; and, though he detested the traitor, he did not hesitate to profit by his treason. Accordingly, the unhappy Prince Charles was surprised in his bed by Hugh Capet's soldiers, who conducted him to a town near Orleans, where he died after some years of sadness and weariness ; and his wife shared the same fate. Two young princes who survived him, were banished from France after the death of their parents, and took refuge in Germany with their cousin, who granted them the Duchy of Lorraine, to hold in fief—that is, on condition that they acknowledged themselves as his liegemen, and their children after them. These two sons of Charles became, therefore, the heads of the illustrious house of Lorraine, which has given to Germany emperors of whom we shall often have occasion to speak in the course of this history.

[A.D. 988.] Hugh Capet, already an old man, wished to see his son Robert consecrated at Rheims, as he himself had been ; thus making sure that no one, after his death, should dispute his right to succeed to the throne of France. We may observe, that the example set by Hugh Capet of consecrating in his lifetime the king who was to succeed him was imitated by all the early Capetian kings, as long as they thought that their hereditary rights were not sufficiently established by their birth.

Robert, the second king of that name who reigned in France, had a cousin named Bertha, who was so good and accomplished that he resolved to make her the sharer of his throne. Bertha was so sweet, gentle, and modest that she at first refused to accept the offer of so much grandeur ; but at last yielding to her cousin's entreaties, and loving him, as she did, with all her heart, she consented to the elevation which was to prove so fatal in its consequences. We must remember that in the Roman Church, the marriage of first cousins is strictly forbidden, and also that of those who have been godfather and godmother to the same child, unless a special dispensation from the Pope is

obtained. Unhappily, when very young Robert and Bertha had been sponsors to the same infant at its baptism ; and thus, as they were cousins, a double impediment was placed in the way of their marriage.

King Robert might doubtless have obtained permission to marry his cousin, but, perhaps from ignorance, he neglected to apply beforehand to the Pope ; and this caused the husband and wife endless trouble and sorrow. For Pope Gregory the Fifth admonished the French king to send away from him Bertha, who could not lawfully be his wife ; but Robert refused to obey this severe decision, and declared he would rather die than part with the wife who was so dear to him.

[A.D. 998.] Then the Pope, seeing that Robert was determined to disobey him, excommunicated him, that is to say, placed him under the most severe displeasure of the Church ; thus depriving him of participation in the sacraments, as well as in public prayer in the church and other acts of devotion, until such time as he should submit to the Pope's authority ; and, if he still continued obstinate, he was to be excluded at his death from the rites appointed for the dead.

The effect of this punishment was immense ; for, as soon as it was known in France that the King and Queen were excommunicated, no one dared go near them, not even their relations or their servants. Even the poor people to whom Bertha had been delighted to distribute alms every day with her own hands fled when they saw her approach ; and this was the greatest sorrow to the kind and charitable princess. Only two servants stayed with the young king and his wife to prepare their food ; and even these faithful creatures were so terror-struck at the Pope's sentence, that they broke the vessels which the King and Bertha used for eating and drinking, and threw the remains of their repast into the fire. At the same time the kingdom was placed under an interdict ; no services were held in the churches, the

pictures were covered with a black veil ; the statues were taken down from their niches and draped with black, and the bells were not allowed to ring or to toll for the burial of the dead. All this caused such general consternation, that the good Queen threw herself at the King's feet, and entreated him to send her away, since she herself was miserable at the thought of causing so much misery : but Robert could not endure the thought of giving her up, as the Pope desired, for ever.

Foolish stories were soon after circulated that the Queen had given birth to a monster with a serpent's tail and the head of a wild goose ; of course sensible people did not believe such gossip any more than they would now ; but the multitude were utterly ignorant and credulous, and never doubted for a moment that this extraordinary birth was the punishment of the King's marriage with his cousin. At length Robert, touched by the increasing trouble of his subjects, consented to Bertha's departure, and the unhappy princess retired to the convent of Chelles, formerly founded by Queen Bathilda, where she led for many years the most holy and religious life. As for the King, he never ceased to mourn her loss, though obliged after a time to marry Princess Constance of Provence, by whom he had four sons.

[A.D. 1031.] It is said that King Robert used sometimes to unite with the monks of Saint Denis in singing praises to God ; he also found the greatest consolation in doing good to the poor — a habit which he had learned from the gentle Bertha ; so when at last he died, and his body was borne to its last resting-place in the Abbey of Saint Denis, a cry was heard on all sides from the poor, who wept for him and said, “ *We have lost the best of kings.*”

CHAPTER XXIII.

GOD'S TRUCE.

From A.D. 1031 to A.D. 1060.

HENRY THE FIRST, son of Robert the Second, was the first of four kings so named, who have reigned at different times over France.

Since the feudal lords, by means of their impregnable castles, were almost the absolute rulers in France under the last Karolings, it frequently happened that these rough warriors went to war with one another for the possession of provinces or territories. Thus you will easily understand that in the time of Henry the First the greater part of the French provinces were constantly the theatre of these private wars, in which dukes, counts, and marquises ravaged the lands of their neighbours, burned the cottages of the peasants, and killed or carried away the serfs to their own domains. Thus in various parts of the country the land was uncultivated, because no one dared show himself in the fields for fear of being taken prisoner or killed by the ferocious people who devastated them; famine and pestilence often depopulated the country, and there was no scourge that this ceaseless war did not bring with it.

In the greater part of the French provinces, especially in those situated on the left bank of the Loire, a large number of bishops, touched with pity by the miseries of the people, met together in large ecclesiastical assemblies, in order to consult about some remedy for the misfortunes which these disastrous battles pro-

duced. Hoping to frighten the most turbulent of the combatants, they threatened those who persisted in carrying on these wretched quarrels with excommunication, and cursed their horses, their arms, and everything they possessed. Companies of priests, by order of the Council, went through the country holding lighted torches in their hands, which they turned down and extinguished in the sight of the people, crying out, "So may the joy and gladness of those be extinguished who do not desire peace and justice." The efforts of the good bishops were at last crowned with success; and they obtained a suspension of hostilities called the Peace of God, because it was proclaimed in God's name. Fear of excommunication recalled the most rebellious to a sense of duty; and many of them swore before the altar never again to set fire to a monastery, always to spare the lives of poor peasants, and always to respect the ploughs and other implements of labour. But at the end of a few years, as justice could only be obtained by absolute force, and as the king's authority did not extend beyond his own Duchy of France, the lords decided with one accord, and with the assent of the Council, that, if any cause of quarrel arose between two noblemen, they should be allowed to fight for three days and two nights in every week. On these days, as you may believe, no one ventured into the roads or exposed themselves by working in the fields, for fear of falling into the power of the soldiers, who were allowed to do everything they chose for the time. This strange agreement, which is characteristic of those unsettled times, was not observed throughout France. King Henry the First especially, opposed himself to it in his own duchy; pretending that to him alone as King belonged the right of keeping in order the vassals of his dominions; however, they feared him but little, the public peace there was continually broken, and the people were oppressed in ever way.

Nevertheless, we may remark, that from the time of Henry the

First, the French lords became less coarse and unruly in their manners. Some of them began to understand how odious many savage customs were which they had followed hitherto, and bound themselves by a solemn vow not to ill-treat the poor, to protect the widow and orphan, and to be ever ready to rise up to defend women and monks.

This vow was taken before the altar, with ceremonies of which I will try to give you some idea; those who took it being called chevaliers, cavaliers, or knights, because they always fought on horseback covered with strong steel armour. The young man who had deserved the dignity of knighthood by his courage and good conduct, after having been clothed in a white robe, passed the night preceding the day when he was to receive it alone in prayer in some church or chapel. This ceremony was called the Vigil of Arms, and the candidate, with folded hands, entreated earnestly that he might have grace given him to live and die in God's faith and fear. When day dawned, he received the communion; his white robe was then taken off, and he was clothed in a tunic of purple, the emblem of his own blood which he was, if necessary, to shed to the last drop in the service of the Church.

He was then led to an old knight to whom was given the title of Sponsor, and who, after embracing the youthful candidate, gave him three light blows of a flat sword upon his shoulders, and a little slap on his face, to signify that he was bound to endure everything rather than break his vow. After this ceremony, which was called the "Accolade," the Sponsor bestowed on the new knight a sword which had been blessed, and fastened gold spurs on his feet, that he might never forget that he must always be ready to hasten where his new duties called him.

The dignity of knighthood, which even kings thought it an honour to receive (as you will see as we go on with our history), conferred on the person who received it privileges which were not

enjoyed by other people. The title of "monseigneur" was granted him, and his wife received that of "madame" or "noble lady." The King himself when writing to a knight called him his "dear and faithful friend;" and he was allowed to raise upon the house which he inhabited a vane, in the form of a banner or pennon, a token which was carried before every captain in battle. Knights were always followed to war, and attended in their own castles, by young men called esquires and pages, who aspired to be knights in their turn; their duty was to assist their lord in unarming, to help him to mount his horse, and never to lose sight of him in battle.

[A.D. 1060.] Henry the First before his death took care to have his eldest son Philip consecrated at Rheims, as he himself had been in the lifetime of his father. The young king, whose power extended far beyond the Duchy of France, took the title of Philip the First, and his reign was contemporary with one of the most important events in the history of the world, which we shall relate in the next chapter.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE FIRST CRUSADE.

From A.D. 1060 to A.D. 1108.

IN the time of Philip the First travellers might have been seen on every road in France, dressed in coarse garments covered with cockle-shells, wearing large hats, and with white staves in their hands, on their way from the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem, which, you know, was the grave of our Lord Jesus Christ.

These people were called Pilgrims, and they had to rest many times on the way before arriving in Palestine, in which country Jerusalem is situated. Dangers of every kind awaited them in the barbarous lands through which they had to pass; but they trusted in God to protect them in their enterprise, and believed that He would not permit them to be taken as slaves or killed by the Saracens, who were then masters of the Holy Land.

Peter the Hermit was a native of Picardy, who set out on a pilgrimage, like many others, for Jerusalem. When he returned to Europe after a long absence, he described in a most pathetic manner the troubles that the pilgrims had to endure on their journey; and his hearers were often moved to tears by his story. He received the name of "Hermit" because, before visiting the Holy Land, he had lived for many years in a hermitage, where he had acquired a great reputation for goodness and virtue; and thus, everything he said was implicitly

believed to be true. On his return from Palestine he had stopped at Rome, where the Pope, Urban the Second, had listened attentively to his story, and allowed him to persuade the kings and lords of Christendom to unite their armies against the Saracens at Jerusalem, and take from them the Holy Sepulchre.

We must picture to ourselves this new apostle passing through Italy and France, addressing himself to lords, bishops, and kings, and beseeching all in turn not to abandon the unhappy pilgrims to the barbarity of the Infidels, nor the grave of our Lord to their profanations. Wherever Peter preached, crowds gathered to hear him ; and princes themselves, as they listened to his burning words, could not help catching the fire of his enthusiasm. Soon an immense number of men, women, and even children assembled at Clermont in Auvergne, where Pope Urban had assembled a Council. Here a war against the Saracens was decided on ; and the eloquence of Peter the Hermit drew after him a crowd to undertake an expedition of which none of them had, up to that moment, had the least idea. Bishops and lords rose to follow him to Jerusalem, and this great multitude, as they marched onward, cried a thousand times their watch-word, "God wills it ! God wills it !" Every one wore on his shoulder a cross of red cloth ; from this badge they received the name of Crusaders, and the enterprise was proclaimed as the Crusade. It is impossible to enumerate here all that this tumultuous crowd of crusaders, consisting more of pilgrims than of soldiers, had to suffer before they reached Jerusalem. They underwent every sort of hardship during the year spent upon the journey ; indeed the first detachments perished before they attained the end of their toilsome labours. Those who did not die of hardships were either slaughtered or taken prisoners by the Saracens, who had the barbarity to put out the eyes of many of these unhappy people. However, a body of the crusaders, composed of a large number of knights and soldiers, and led by Godfrey de Bouillon,

a French general, at last rescued Jerusalem from the enemy [A.D. 1099]; and they forgot all their misfortunes when they knelt by the holy sepulchre, and appointed Godfrey to keep guard over it, with the title of King of Jerusalem.

The crusade thus preached by Peter the Hermit, and conducted by Godfrey de Bouillon, was only the prelude to a large number of enterprises of the same kind, which for more than two hundred years led many Christian armies to the places held sacred as the cradle of our holy religion. We shall see later what important influence the crusades exercised successively over Europe, which had scarcely yet emerged from barbarism; and we may remark at the same time, that King Philip the First took no personal part in the immense popular demonstration of which he had consented to be a witness.

After this expedition, there were to be constantly seen in almost every country of Europe a number of crusaders, who visited country places and castles to tell of all that they had seen in Palestine, and of the many good knights and nobles who had covered themselves with glory in their battles with the Infidels. Sometimes poetry and music aided the narrative; those who were skilled in these were called Minstrels, and welcomed wherever they appeared; because everybody hoped that they might bring tidings of relatives and friends who had gone to the Holy Land and not returned. They were always offered food and lodging; and it was generally considered that a kindly welcome to the minstrels would not fail to bring happiness to the house which thus received them.

Some of the pilgrims, in returning from Palestine, brought with them monkeys, bears, and other animals, with which they amused the spectators as they passed, in order to gain a living. These people were called jugglers; and King Philip ordered that when one of them presented himself before any of the gates of Paris, he should be free of toll, on making his monkey dance before

the porter. This custom lasted for a great many years, and gave rise to the proverb, "payer dans l'argent du singe," which is applied even now to those who pay their debts by deceitful words and subterfuge.

CHAPTER XXV.

ENFRANCHISEMENT—THE COMMONS.

From A.D. 1108 to A.D. 1137.

[A.D. 1108.] PHILIP THE FIRST had married twice; his son by his first wife succeeded to the throne under the title of Louis the Sixth, surnamed le Gros, for the same reason which had given this unflattering surname to his predecessor Charles, the coward who bribed the Normans instead of fighting them. But Louis the Sixth was like Charles in nothing but his name, as he showed himself a remarkably clever and brave prince. The greater part of his life was spent in fighting against his numerous vassals, who, even in his own Duchy of France, openly disobeyed him by sacking monasteries, and by plundering the travellers and merchants on the public roads and those who passed through their domains on their way to Paris. But the King, by the help of his faithful lords, defeated the rebels in a succession of battles, took a large number of castles out of their hands, all which he demolished, and acted with so much courage and decision, that the most turbulent were reduced to submission and swore fealty anew; in fact, Louis the Sixth was the first Capetian king

their lords to molest any artizan, either in his person or his property.

All who took this oath were enrolled among the burghers or commons, and their assembly was called the Commune. After this, in order to summon an assembly whenever it was required, a large bell was placed in a tower called the Belfry, at the sound of which the commons flew to arms, and held themselves ready to obey a magistrate elected by themselves, to whom the title of Sheriff was given. Communes were formed in many cities, which until then had belonged to different Counts or Bishops; and, when their lords attempted to quell them by force, the commons, assembling at the sound of the great bell, fought for their rights desperately. As brave as they were persevering, they forced the lords to grant them by written agreement all the elements of a rational liberty; and the contracts which were entered into between the commons and their Counts received the name of Charters. Louis the Sixth affixed his seal to many such Charters; so that in the future the lords could not interfere with the burgesses of chartered towns without incurring the anger of the King, whose will began to be respected by every one. Thus under the rule of Louis le Gros the Commons of France sprang into existence; and you must try to fix this point in your memory, as it is one of the most important events in French history. The feudal system had divided the country between lords and serfs; now we see a third order rising rapidly into importance, and including the burgesses of all the influential towns and cities.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE PARLIAMENT.

From A.D. 1137 to A.D. 1180.

You have not forgotten, I dare say, the tumultuous assemblies of the Champ de Mars, where I told you the Franks assembled in the time of the first Merovingian kings.

You will remember, also, that when the conquering race was dispersed over the territory of Gaul, the attendance at this assembly was not what it had been, and soon consisted mostly of bishops, counts, and royal leudes. Since the days of the last Karolings these assemblies, renewed for a time by Charlemagne, who liked to consult them about his capitularies, had nearly fallen into disuse ; and the greater number of the feudal lords, entrenched within their fortified manors, were very unwilling to leave them in order to assist at these convocations.

When Louis the Seventh, surnamed the Young, had succeeded his father Louis the Sixth, he summoned all the vassals of his Duchy of France, and conferred on them the title of Barons, a word signifying "free men." These French barons were the real descendants of the old Frank chiefs, who had formerly conquered Gaul ; and their meeting, to which also the bishops and abbots of the principal monasteries came, received the name of King's Court, or Parliament.

The early years of the reign of Louis the Young were passed, as the greater part of his father's reign had been spent, in making war upon his rebellious vassals, and extending the French

dominions. He was the first Capetian king who crossed the Loire, and occupied the southern provinces of ancient Gaul. There many of the lords who had up to this time refused to acknowledge the authority of the King of France were obliged to do him homage and declare themselves his liegemen.

About this time France began to be divided into two parts, which were distinguished from each other by the language which was spoken there. One called the *Langue d'Oïl* is situated on the right bank of the Loire; the other, called the *Langue d'Oc*, on the other side of this river. They were thus called on account of the different languages spoken by the inhabitants, who, in the north, used the word "*oïl*" and the south the word "*oc*" for "yes." But Louis the Seventh did not long retain his power over Languedoc; it was chiefly the great vassals of his French duchy who acknowledged his supremacy. He was not of so noble a nature as his father had been; and a single event in his history will serve to show how very dangerous it is for a king to give himself up to undisciplined temper. In fighting against the Count of Champagne [A.D. 1143], one of the fiefs of the French crown, he besieged a small town called Vitry in that province, and the inhabitants resisted so obstinately, that he could not make himself master of the place till after a most sanguinary contest. The prolonged defence had irritated Louis so much, that he exclaimed in a moment of passion, that he wished the whole town of Vitry were burned to a heap of cinders. When he uttered this threat he did not really think any one would execute it; and he was certainly not of a cruel disposition. But some of the courtiers who were near him, thinking they should gain his favour, without waiting for new orders, set fire to the town on all sides, and it was soon burned to the ground; even the principal church, where more than eight hundred persons, men, women, and children, had sought a refuge from the King's vengeance, was destroyed, and not one of them

escaped. The fire was still raging when Louis, awaking to a sense of his crime, was seized with the most terrible despair. To increase his misery, the Pope excommunicated him, as he had King Robert ; and he could only obtain pardon by swearing to lead in person a new crusade to the Holy Land, where the Saracens, who threatened to regain possession of Jerusalem, had already caused the death of a multitude of Christians. The celebrated St. Bernard preached the Second Crusade in France and Germany, just as Peter the Hermit had preached the first ; and a large army marched under the command of Louis, whose queen followed him in this distant expedition.

In setting out on this perilous journey, the King placed the government of the kingdom during his absence in the hands of Suger, the venerable abbot of St. Denis, one of the best and most learned men of the time, and known by Louis to be devotedly attached to him and to the best interests of the country. It was from the hands of Suger that the king received on his departure the banner of St. Denis, called the Oriflamme or "Golden Flame," to which success in war was always believed to be attached.

However, none crowned the Second Crusade ; for the Christian army experienced many losses, and the King himself only escaped by his brave conduct from the dangers which surrounded him : yet it was not till after he had exhausted the strength of his army by twenty useless battles, that he decided [A.D. 1149] on returning to France, where great troubles awaited him in his own family.

His wife, Queen Eleanor, was one of the most beautiful princesses of her time. She had brought her husband, as her dowry, the Duchy of Aquitaine, one of the principal states in the south of Gaul. But she was so proud, imperious, and ill-conducted, that Louis divorced her, and, contrary to the advice of most of his counsellors, restored the whole of her dowry. He had reason,

however, to regret this step ; for Eleanor at once married Henry, Duke of Normandy, afterwards King of England, who thus added another fair province to those which he already possessed in France. Louis the Seventh soon after married a daughter of the King of Castille ; but she lived a very short time, and then he espoused a good princess, named Alix de Champagne [A.D. 1160], by whom five years afterwards he had a son, famous in the history of France, under the name of Philip Augustus.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE BATTLE OF BOVINES.

From A.D. 1180 to A.D. 1214.

THE chief event in the early part of Philip Augustus's reign is the Crusade in which he joined Richard Cœur de Lion, King of England [A.D. 1190], for the redemption of Jerusalem, which had again fallen into the power of the Saracens. In pursuit of this object, Richard and Philip Augustus rivalled each other in deeds of valour and daring, and the soldiers of both armies also distinguished themselves ; but all their efforts resulted only in the capture of the strong fortress of St. Jean d'Acre, which was taken after a long and sanguinary siege. For some time after this the most perfect harmony subsisted between the two princes, and they knew no other rivalry than that of glory ; afterwards, unhappily, a mutual distrust crept in, and brought about a division between them ; and from that moment the cause of the Christians

in Palestine may be said to have been lost. The ill-success of the expedition, and Philip's dislike to Richard, at length determined him to retreat from the field, and he re-embarked for France, where other work awaited him.

[A.D. 1191.] When we spoke of the various conquests of the Dukes of Burgundy, Normandy, and Aquitaine, we found that from the time of Hugh Capet they were all considered as the liegemen of the Kings of France, though really often as powerful as their Suzerain. Each one of them could easily raise an army as numerous as that of the Capetians; but they were, nevertheless, submissive to a certain extent towards their princes. Even when William the Norman had conquered England, the kings of that country were liegemen of the French kings for Normandy; and it is easy to understand that quarrels and wars would arise out of the twofold relation between the Kings of England and France.

Richard Cœur de Lion died soon after his return from Palestine, and was succeeded on the throne of England by his brother John, surnamed Lackland, who had cruelly murdered his nephew Arthur, the son of his elder brother Geoffrey and the rightful heir to the crown.

Now when any vassal under the feudal law was guilty of a crime like John's, or failed in his obedience to his lord, he was summoned before a tribunal of vassals of his own rank, who were called his "peers," or equals, and by whom he was judged; if the accused person refused to present himself, the Suzerain had power to take from him his estates and indeed to deprive him of all that he had.

This is precisely what happened to John Lackland, after the death of his young nephew, Arthur of Brittany. For Philip, as his Suzerain, commanded him to appear before the Parliament to answer for his crime, and the King of England refused to obey him. Philip therefore embraced this opportunity of resum-

ing the Duchy of Normandy and many other provinces which belonged to his vassal ; so that Aquitaine was now the only English province in France. John, however, absolutely refused to submit to the sentence passed on him, and went about in the different countries of Europe exciting the enemies of Philip Augustus to make war on him, and accusing him, of having unjustly robbed him of his French possessions.

Many European princes, uneasy at the increasing power of the King of France, took John's part, and amongst them was Ferrand Count of Flanders, in union with Otho Emperor of Germany. These princes joined their forces, and marched at the same time from various quarters against Philip Augustus, who hastened to meet them. The king had raised the Oriflamme, and around it a number of faithful barons had gathered, with many soldiers from the Communes of France, distinguished by the different-coloured banners of their respective towns and cities. One day, after a long and painful march in the most oppressive heat, the King, who was taking a short rest about noon under the shade of a tree near Bovines in Flanders, was told that great clouds of dust were seen in the distance, and that, therefore, the host of the enemy was approaching. Philip instantly ordered the trumpets to be sounded, and every Frenchman rushed to his arms. The King himself, after offering on his knees a short but fervent prayer to God to bless his efforts, placed his crown and sceptre upon an altar which had been raised in the sight of his troops, and in a voice loud enough to be heard at a great distance, challenged any one worthier of the crown than himself to come forward, as he was quite ready to give it up.

At these words, which were caught up and repeated through the ranks of the army, there was one unanimous shout of " Long live King Philip ! long live the King Augustus ! we are ready to die for him ! " At the same time the barons and soldiers nearest the King threw themselves at his feet and entreated his blessing ;

nor did they rise till Philip mounted his horse, and gave the signal for battle.

A small wooden bridge stood between the two armies; and the French were obliged to cross it before closing with the enemy. This bridge was forced by the sergeants-at-arms, who formed the usual body-guard of the King; after which they deployed to receive the allies, who were at least three times more numerous than the French. A terrible battle ensued, and many men fell on both sides. Philip himself was in great danger; for he was thrown in the very thick of the battle under the horses' feet, and had it not been for the courage of the knights who surrounded him, would certainly have been killed or taken prisoner. The Emperor Otho, meanwhile, was placed in the centre of his army, raised on a high chariot, and with the imperial standard borne before him, on which a gold eagle was represented as resting on a dragon, so that the whole army could see it as they fought. At first victory seemed on the side of the allies; but by the time Philip had remounted and resumed the command of his troops, disorder spread through the enemy's ranks, and after some vain efforts to regain the advantage they had lost, the allies were obliged to seek safety in flight. The Emperor Otho allowed himself to be hurried away by the fugitives, and the standard was left to the French, while Count Ferrand fell alive into their hands.

We will give some farther details of the battle of Bovines in order to give you an idea of the way in which warfare was carried on before the invention of gunpowder. The knights, who, as you know, fought on horseback covered from head to foot with heavy iron armour, showed great valour on this day; but numbers of them were thrown at the first shock, and, as they could not rise without the help of their squires, victory would perhaps have escaped the French had it not been for the Commons, who were lightly clothed and armed only with bows and

arrows, yet resisted for many hours the attacks of the allied army.

After this victory the King led the Count of Flanders to Paris, where he was condemned to pass the rest of his life in prison; while his conqueror found himself the most renowned monarch of his time.

Not many years ago there was to be seen in Paris under the gate of a chapel which is now demolished, a stone on which was written in old French characters these words :—

“ At the prayer of the sergeants-at-arms, Saint Loys founded this church, and laid here the first stone. This was done in joyful memory of the victory of the Bridge of Bovines, A.D. 1214. The sergeants-at-arms guarded the aforesaid bridge for some time, and vowed that if God granted them the victory they would build a church in honour of Saint Catherine. Thus it was done.”

On the same day on which Philip Augustus completely defeated the Emperor Otho on the plain of Bovines, his eldest son Louis put to flight the army of John in a pitched battle, and compelled this wicked man to return to England. This double event ruined the hopes of the allied powers, and henceforth the reign of Philip was peaceful and glorious. No Capetian prince had ever possessed so extensive a kingdom; his most turbulent vassals were reduced to obedience, and the King now turned his thoughts towards peace and the good of his people.

Paris at this time was very different from the city we now see, so full of beautiful buildings and monuments of the past. The dark narrow streets were not even paved; and it was impossible to walk through them without sinking in the mud. One day, as Philip Augustus was looking from one of the windows of his castle, where the Palace of Justice now stands, he saw some heavily laden waggons, which a large team of horses could scarcely drag through the mire. The sight suggested to the King

the idea of paving the principal streets with large slabs of stone ; and not long after this time pavements like those employed at the present day were introduced.

The magnificent palace of the Louvre, which is now so splendidly finished, stands upon the site of a large tower where Philip Augustus kept the royal treasure, and which was also used as a prison for distinguished people. It was here that Ferrand, Count of Flanders, endured his long captivity. It did not then stand in the centre of the town as it now does ; for the houses of Paris scarcely reached beyond the present Hôtel de Ville. But the erection of buildings was not the greatest of Philip Augustus's achievements. He ought always to be gratefully remembered for the protection which he granted to scholars and learned men, who flocked to Paris from all parts, to give themselves up to study ; for there were then no colleges in other provinces of the kingdom as there now are. The Paris schools became the most popular and frequented of the time ; and it was in great measure owing to their fame that the city increased so rapidly in size and prosperity.

streets of the city, and falling victims to misery and sickness of every kind, could not endure to prolong their wretchedness; he therefore promised the Pope's Legate to present himself in the camp of the Crusaders and reconcile himself to the Church and the Pope, provided that his people were spared and the Crusaders' army withdrawn from Languedoc. But scarcely had the prince reached the camp of the enemy, when by a shameful act of treachery he was loaded with chains, as well as those who accompanied him, and thrown into a prison where he languished in misery for a few years and then died. As to the unhappy inhabitants of Carcassonne, the Crusaders, who began to be satiated with carnage, offered them their lives, but only on condition of their leaving the city at once and abandoning all that they possessed.

Nearly all the towns belonging to the Comte de Béziers suffered the hardships of war in succession; and Toulouse, the capital of Languedoc, fell into the power of the Crusaders. Count Raymond was driven from his kingdom, although he submitted to public penances and made a pretence of joining himself to the Crusaders' army. The war lasted for fourteen years; and during that time the fair province of Languedoc was overspread far and wide with desolation and misery.

[A.D. 1215.] After it had been thus reduced, the greater part of the Crusaders dispersed. But, as it was necessary to give a prince to the desolated province, the crusading barons thought Simon de Montfort the most suitable for the dignity, as being one of the cleverest and at the same time the most relentless of the chiefs engaged. After for a time refusing the proposed elevation, Simon was induced by the Legate's entreaty to accept it, and was named Count of Toulouse in place of Raymond, who, from his Albigenian connections, was held incapable of reigning there any longer. He did not, however, long enjoy his good fortune. His whole life was a succession of battles against the

Albigenses, who were always re-appearing, sustained and helped by a great body of the Commons of Languedoc who had taken the name of the Republic; and Amaury de Montfort was obliged at his father's death to offer to Louis the Eighth, who had just succeeded Philip Augustus, the sovereignty of this unhappy country, which he could no longer defend; and it was then that Languedoc became part of the kingdom of France, from which it has never again been separated.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE REIGN OF SAINT LOUIS.

From A.D. 1226 to A.D. 1270.

[A.D. 1226.] LOUIS THE NINTH was only twelve years old, when by the death of his father, Louis the Eighth, he was called to the throne of France. As he was too young to undertake the government of the kingdom for himself, his mother, Blanche of Castille, was appointed Regent until her son was fourteen years old; at which age French kings were supposed to be wise enough to direct their own affairs. Blanche, who was as beautiful as she was good, was one of the most excellent princesses who ever lived. From his earliest infancy, Louis learned from his mother that reverence for religion and earnestness in the cause of God which never forsook him; and all that we admire in his after-life was in great measure owing to the teaching of his early years, and the example which his mother always set before him.

The young King had a very sweet face, full of expression, and an abundance of fair hair fell in graceful curls over his shoulders; while his manner was full of dignity and gentleness. He was always more simply dressed than the lords who surrounded him, but conspicuous amongst them by the grace and nobleness of his bearing. Kind and courteous to the humblest and the poorest, he was dignified and even proud towards the rich and powerful, who never approached him without a feeling of respect, as well as love. Born with an ardent and courageous temper, which the sense of religion could alone control, he distinguished himself in battle by his valour, and at the same time softened the miseries of war by the most unwearying charity.

Amongst other acts; which win our admiration, Louis showed the utmost tenderness and gratitude towards the Queen his mother, to whom he felt he owed so much; and we may remark in passing, that really good and great men, whether kings or peasants, have never been known to forget the respect that a child should show to his parents. The filial piety which Louis practised in his youth was the same to the end of his life, and, in whatever circumstances he found himself placed, his love for his mother never failed for a single instant.

Near the castle of Vincennes, not far from Paris, was an oak under which the young King was very fond of sitting. It was here that his poor and needy subjects were allowed to speak to him without any restraint; he helped some, he comforted others, and no one ever left him without receiving from his hand some benefit, or from his lips some good and kind word. During the days of Louis's early youth, there were to be seen in the streets of Paris a large number of blind and half-naked people, homeless and friendless, and begging their daily bread.

The King was inexpressibly touched at the condition of these unhappy ones. He ordered a hospital to be built; and every blind person who came to the gate for admission, was received

and taken care of if ill, and fed and clothed if in good health. This hospital still exists, and is known as the Hospice de Quinze Vingts; and for nearly six hundred years the blind poor have owed to Saint Louis the help and comfort which it has afforded them. But this good king was not only occupied with helping the poor and founding hospitals, he knew how to make himself feared by the enemies of France; and, when he went to war, he was always seen fighting at the head of the bravest warriors.

[A.D. 1242.] He had scarcely grown into manhood, when the Duke of Brittany, Count of Toulouse, son of the famous Raymond who had formerly defended his kingdom against Simon de Montfort, and many other great vassals of the crown, hoping to profit by the King's youth, called in the help of foreign power to unite with him against the King of France, as the Count of Flanders and the Emperor Otho had done against Philip Augustus. The Count of Toulouse now called to his aid Henry the Third, King of England and Duke of Aquitaine, who soon disembarked on the coast of Brittany at the head of a powerful army. Louis, however, defeated them completely near the town of Taillebourg in a sanguinary battle, where the young King fought himself in the very front ranks with the greatest bravery. Alarmed at his overthrow, the King of England hastily abandoned the princes who had summoned him to their aid, saying that he had been grossly deceived; while the Count of Toulouse acknowledged himself the vassal of the King of France.

Louis from his earliest youth had taken the utmost delight in hearing about the crusades conducted by his predecessors, Philip the First, Louis the Seventh, and Philip Augustus. About this time he was taken dangerously ill, and the whole of France was plunged in the deepest grief. According to the custom of the Roman Church, the monks from the different monasteries,

with their relics, formed solemn religious processions, entreating God to spare the life of the King ; and a crowd of people followed barefoot, singing canticles, which were often broken by the sobs of those who were present. Meanwhile the Queen, Margaret of Provence, sister-in-law to Henry the Third of England, knelt by the King's bed day and night, with the Queen-mother, praying to God to restore one who was so greatly beloved. Though Louis was so ill, he was perfectly conscious of all that passed ; and, though the doctors gave no hope of his recovery, he committed his soul to the hands of God, and vowed that if his life was spared, he would devote it to conduct a new crusade against the Saracens.

On his recovery, his first thought was to prepare for this distant expedition ; and Queen Margaret determined to share its dangers with him. The King's brothers were also associated in the enterprise ; and a large number of lords, who were not rich enough to bear the expenses of such a long journey, sold almost everything they possessed in order to accompany the King.

It seems to have been thought by the King's advisers, that the best chance of recovering Palestine, was to subdue Egypt first, and use it as a base of operations for future war. Accordingly the French army sailed to that country, and made themselves masters at once of the strong city of Damietta [A.D. 1249], built upon one of the largest mouths of the Nile.

I cannot attempt to tell you here all the deeds of valour by which Louis distinguished himself in the war ; it is enough for you to know that he fought with varied success many battles, the most sanguinary of which was that of Mansourah, where the King's brother and a multitude of crusaders perished. Louis himself was dangerously wounded, and fell into the hands of the Saracens, who are said to have spared his life only from admiration for a prince who seemed greater in time of trouble than when he was at the head of a powerful army. Louis was indeed

calm and resigned to God's will in this great reverse of fortune, and his faith in His ever ruling power never faltered.

After a hard time of captivity, during which the King, as well as those who were with him, was often exposed to great dangers,



RETREAT OF SAINT LOUIS.

he was allowed to purchase his freedom and that of his servants by giving up Damietta as a ransom. [A.D. 1254.] He now rejoined Queen Margaret and her children in that town, collected the wreck of the noble army which had shared in his disasters, and set sail for France, learning with great grief on the way that Queen Blanche, his much loved mother, had just died.

On the voyage homewards a violent storm struck the vessel, which had all the royal family on board ; and it was feared that she was sinking. The sailors gave up all hope, commended their souls to God, and entreated Louis to place himself and his wife and children in a boat, in which they might possibly reach an island that was seen in the distance.

The Queen threw herself at the King's feet, and besought him to make use of the only means of safety which remained to them ; but Louis calmly replied that the life of the humblest mariner on board was as precious in God's sight as his own, and that he left the result in His hands. Nothing could induce him to alter this resolution, and his courage saved the ship ; for the sailors, for the sake of such a master, made efforts which they would not have made for their own safety. The storm at last abated, and Louis landed in France, where his faithful subjects were longing for his return.

This brave king, whom we have just seen so great in misfortune, did not forget that his first duty was to watch over the interests of the French people, and it is to his justice and humanity that we owe many good laws which had for their object the improvement of their condition, and are still known in French history, under the name of 'the Laws of Saint Louis.'

Before Louis's reign the following barbarous custom had existed in France, which could be traced back to very ancient times, having been brought into Gaul by the Ripuarian Franks or Burgundians and adopted by the feudal lords.

When one man brought, as we now say, an action against another, their feudal lord, instead of carefully examining the reasons which each one could bring forward against his adversary, and making them explain and justify these, ordered that they should fight in his presence until one or other was killed or confessed himself conquered. This combat was called the Judicial Duel, or God's Judgment, because it was believed that

God gave the victory to the one who had right on his side : but nothing could be more presumptuous than such an attempt to force the providence of God to interfere, where nothing was required but patience to search out the truth by evidence.

These duels ordered by the judge, actually often took place at the church doors, and in the presence of a number of witnesses. People of high rank fought with a lance or sword, in their coats of mail and full armour, but the serfs were only allowed to use sticks or clubs.

Saint Louis earnestly desired to put an end to this cruel custom, which placed the life and fortune of the weak and innocent at the mercy of the guilty, if strong and skilful. He commanded that for the future the judges, instead of ordering the duel, should oblige both the disputants and the witnesses to whom they appealed to put their declarations in writing, so that they might be subjected to legal investigation. This important change was not at all agreeable to the French barons, who for the most part knew well how to handle the lance and sword, but thought it beneath their dignity to learn to read or write. Consequently they were soon weary of listening to the pleaders, who often presented themselves before the tribunal with whole bags of written parchments, by means of which each pretended to make good his cause ; and they soon entrusted such matters to the care of men better educated than themselves, to whom they gave the name of *bailiffs*.

The King seeing that the barons disliked coming to his Parliament, was obliged to summon to this tribunal men who had studied the law in the schools of Paris, which since the time of Philip Augustus had been much frequented. These persons, who for the most part belonged to the class of Burgesses or Commons, received the name of 'Gentlemen of the Robe,' because the judges wore then, as now, long black gowns or robes, and very soon they alone occupied the tribunals of the King and the nobles.

Saint Louis also by his laws forbade the barons of his domain to engage in those private wars which had been so often renewed since the time of the Peace of God : and the working men had cause to thank God for giving them a king able and willing



SAINT LOUIS ADMINISTERING JUSTICE.

thus to interest himself about them, and to end those miseries which had so long desolated the country.

But, if the wisdom and goodness of Louis the Ninth made him thus anxious to remove the evils which had so afflicted his

subjects, he was always most severe towards those who, in anger or drunkenness, used wicked oaths or profane language, or who insulted sacred things; he sentenced such persons to have their lips bored with a hot iron, and if they were under fourteen they were whipped in the public market-place. It may perhaps seem to you that this was a very severe punishment for a fault which one only expects to find in rude, ill-disciplined people, or in those who have lost their reason. But Saint Louis thought no crime greater than taking God's name in vain, and showing contempt instead of reverence for holy things; while on the contrary he was always disposed to be lenient towards personal injuries, having early learned that one of the most beautiful precepts of our religion is that which commands us to forgive, as we would be forgiven.

Louis had not forgotten his vow to fight against the Saracens wherever he met them; and he now determined to lead a new army into the East in fulfilment of his promise. This time Tunis, an African city built upon the site of the ancient Carthage, was the place against which he directed the crusade. But scarcely had he set foot on the shores of Africa, when the plague broke out with fearful violence in his camp, and committed frightful ravages. The King himself was one of the first to be attacked by this dreadful disease, which he caught in his heroic efforts to take care of the sick. Feeling that his illness would prove fatal, he called his eldest son, who was to succeed him under the title of Philip the Third; and after having entreated him to make the happiness of France his first thought, and to live in the faith and fear of God, he expired in peace, in the sight of his army, who refused to be comforted for his loss. Just as Louis breathed his last, his brother, the Count of Anjou, landed on the coast with a large number of fresh crusaders. This Prince was indeed distressed and awe-struck as he saw princes, barons, and soldiers plunged in a common sorrow, and weeping bitterly round the

tent of their beloved King, who had now for the first time left them in the midst of danger. Soon a vessel with black sails set forth sadly from the coast of Tunis ; on board of her Philip the Third was bearing home the mortal remains of his father to rest, after so many troubles, in the quiet burial-place of his family at Saint Denis.

CHAPTER XXX.

MARIE OF BRABANT.

From A.D. 1270 to A.D. 1278.


[A.D. 1270.] PHILIP THE THIRD, son of Saint Louis, was surnamed the Bold on account of his extraordinary courage in all the battles in which he had taken part. He married when very young a good and excellent princess, who soon after died, leaving him a son named Louis, whom the King tenderly loved for his likeness to his lost wife.

After many years of widowhood, the King's friends begged him to take another wife with whom he might hope to enjoy better days, and proposed to him the Princess Mary, sister of the Duke of Brabant, who was one of the most powerful vassals of the King of France.

Mary of Brabant was as good as she was beautiful ; the fame of her golden hair and lovely eyes had reached the Court of France, and Philip at last asked her in marriage and placed upon her fair head the royal crown, which she wore with the

utmost grace and dignity. The happy event was celebrated at the Court by magnificent fêtes and games, and splendid entertainments of every kind. Alms and gifts were distributed amongst the people, and every one was ready to bless the young Queen on her arrival in France. But she was not destined to enjoy any happiness there. Her husband had unfortunately admitted to his confidence a man named Peter Labrosse, formerly barber to Saint Louis, and who had been accustomed to tell him all the scraps of news which he could collect for his amusement. Peter seems to have been a man of some culture and ability; and Philip, who had known him from infancy, actually made him the depositary of his most secret thoughts, besides loading him with all kinds of favours. The man appeared amiable and engaging, but was in reality intensely jealous of the love the King bore his new wife, Marie of Brabant, whose society he naturally preferred to that of his favourite; and when an occasion presented itself, he did his utmost to ruin this good and charming Princess. It happened that Louis, the child of the King's first marriage, was taken ill and died suddenly, without any one being able to find out the cause of his death. Labrosse secretly found access to the King's room; found him stupefied by grief at this sad bereavement, and made him believe by treacherous and wicked hints that the Queen had poisoned his son, in order to secure the succession of the throne to her own children.

This fearful denunciation, though it seemed as if it could not be true, threw the King into a state of miserable perplexity. He repulsed with horror the idea that Mary could be guilty of such a crime, after showing, as she had done, the greatest affection to her stepson, and mourning for him most sincerely; yet the sudden and strange death of his beloved child seemed mysterious. Then the crafty Labrosse made use of the most odious means to strengthen Philip's faith in his calumnies. He pretended that he possessed some knowledge of medicine; and taking the King to the body of



the young prince, he pointed out to the unhappy father some livid spots, which he assured him were always the signs of poison. This was not all. He brought a man who declared that, on the evening before the death of the young Prince, the Queen had been seen in the night in a distant room in the palace, preparing with her own hands the juices of some herbs whose use was unknown. Every detail was given by this villain, who had been bribed by Labrosse to invent this wicked lie, and give it the appearance of truth ; and, in spite of the uncertainty which the King still felt, the unhappy Mary was closely confined in prison, to be burned as a murderess, unless some knight had the generosity to defend her honour at the risk of his own character and life.

Knights, you will remember, were obliged by their oath to come to the rescue of all who were weak and oppressed ; and the Duke of Brabant, Mary's brother, presented himself as her defender, so that she escaped the horrible and unrighteous punishment which awaited her. The French people, when they knew that the Queen was preserved from the malice of her accusers, were transported with joy ; for they had never for a moment believed her guilty. But Mary, although her life was saved, could not be happy while Philip had any doubt as to her innocence ; so she remained in retirement and inconsolable at being the object of such suspicions.

In a small town in Flanders, there lived in those days a religious person called the Beguine of Nivelles, who was supposed to be very skilful in finding out things hidden from the rest of the world. Mary had often heard of her reputation, and in her despair she besought the King to send one of his trusty servants, and ask her if he ought to believe the accusations which had been brought against her. Philip, who was only anxious to see his wife's innocence proved, gladly acceded to her request, and messengers were at once despatched to Nivelles. It is said that as soon as the

Beguine saw them approaching, and before they had laid before her the object of their visit, she exclaimed that they might hasten back to the King and tell him that he had been duped and deceived, for that Mary of Brabant had never committed the crime of which she had been accused; she did not, however, reveal the name of the person who had brought the false accusation. On this the good servants returned to Philip with all speed, and transported him with joy at the answer they brought. Even the villain Labrosse pretended to rejoice with him and all the Court; the only person who remained miserable was Mary herself, who passed days and nights in prayer to God to make known not only her innocence, but the author of her unhappiness. At length these prayers were heard; for a stranger—whose name and country were never discovered—brought Philip a letter which a dying traveller had entreated him to place in the hands of the King himself. This letter made known to Philip the treachery of his favourite; and you may imagine how great was the King's indignation when he learned the particulars of the odious plot. He ordered that Labrosse should be hanged; and the Queen, now completely restored to her husband's confidence and love, lived for many years happily with him; while he made it the object of his life by tenderness and affection to wipe out from her memory the sorrows which she had so unjustly suffered.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE SICILIAN VESPERS.

From A.D. 1278 to A.D. 1285.

WHILE Philip the Bold was reigning in France, the island of Sicily was the scene of an event which must not be passed in silence. Charles of Anjou, the brother of Saint Louis, had formerly led a French army into Italy, and conquered the Kingdom of Naples, of which Sicily then formed a part. This Prince, who was as generous as he was brave, granted such large rewards to the soldiers who followed him, that many of them renounced their own country, and determined to settle on an island of which they believed they had become the lawful possessors. Unhappily the greater part of them were rough undisciplined men, proud and insolent in their behaviour to the Sicilians, upon whom they looked down with contempt; while these in their turn, being of a vindictive and implacable nature, could not patiently endure the sight of the foreigners who so continually reminded them of their defeat.

The principal lords of the country, amongst whom Giovanni di Procida, a member of one of the most illustrious Sicilian families, was the chief, were constantly entering into secret relations with the enemies of France, and fostering the hope of speedy deliverance.

The capital of Sicily is Palermo, which you will now find on the map; and at the time of which we speak, a large number of Frenchmen were settled in it.

On Easter Day, in the year 1282, as the bell rang for evensong on this great festival of the Christian year, a French soldier who had drunk too much wine ill-treated a young girl in one of the streets of Palermo; she screamed for help to the passers by, and in a moment a raging crowd had torn the offender to pieces. Thus far the vengeance seemed just, as only the guilty person had suffered; but the fury of the people, once excited, did not confine itself to this single murder. While the vesper bells were yet ringing, all the French in Palermo were butchered without distinction of age or sex; one gentleman alone being spared, because of his high character for goodness and beneficence.

As soon as the news of the massacre reached the other towns of Sicily, they also hastened to follow the bloody example; and the "Vespers of Palermo" have thus obtained a terrible celebrity in Sicilian history; as the number of persons put to death was more than eight thousand.

It is remarkable that from this time the kingdom of Naples (which by this event was separated for nearly a hundred years from that of Sicily) has been a kind of bane to the French nation, and that the dynasty of Charles of Anjou itself died out after a long succession of crimes and reverses of every kind.

Philip the Bold was overwhelmed with sorrow and indignation, when he heard that his uncle, Charles of Anjou, had lost that crown which had cost the lives of so many of his subjects. He prepared to lead a formidable army against the King of Aragon, who had taken part with Jean de Procida in the rebellion at Palermo, but was taken ill and died comparatively young. Philip, his eldest son, who was seventeen years old, succeeded him on the throne of France, under the title of Philip the Fourth; and was surnamed the Fair, from the unusual beauty of his face and figure.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE TEMPLARS.

From A.D. 1285 to A.D. 1314.

[A.D. 1285.] ALTHOUGH Philip the Fair was a mere boy when he came to the throne, he already showed so much energy and decision of character, that his accession was hailed as the beginning of a reign which would equal the best times of the monarchy ; and, had it not been for one barbarous and unjust action which tarnished his glory, it might be said that the hopes of his people were realized.

Great courage and endurance had constantly been displayed by crusaders in the times which we are describing ; but none of them had struggled so bravely and persistently as the Great Order of the Templars, so called, because they had vowed to guard and defend the Temple at Jerusalem. Their chief was invested with the title of Grand Master, and was usually an old man distinguished for his courage and virtue. In the time of Philip the Fair the office was held by Jacques de Molay. As the nations of Europe had apparently lost the crusading spirit, no more such expeditions were undertaken after the death of Saint Louis ; so the Templars, finding their efforts were useless, returned to France and employed their wealth in building magnificent palaces, where they lived in ease and luxury. Such an existence was certainly not an honourable one for warriors who had devoted themselves to the defence of the Holy Sepulchre, and had sworn to live in poverty and labour ; but,

be that as it may, they little deserved the terrible fate which awaited them, and which was caused in the following manner. The early Capetian kings, when obliged to go to war, had had no need to pay their soldiers, because the barons had been bound to furnish contingents at their own expense. But after the greater part of the lords had seen their castles destroyed, and the inhabitants of their towns freed by charter, they could only rally round them a very small number of vassals ; the kings were therefore obliged to equip and arm their soldiers at their own expense. On this account the treasure formerly kept in the tower of the Louvre was entirely exhausted, and Philip used various means, more or less unjust, in order to meet the most pressing needs of the crown. Sometimes he robbed the foreign merchants settled in France, and called Lombards because the greater part of them had originally been Italian merchants. Sometimes he circulated through the kingdom money of less than the nominal value ; a disastrous expedient which made the people give him the surname of the ' False Coiner.'

Unhappily amongst his advisers there were men who persuaded him that the Templars were become rebellious subjects, forgetting their ancient glory, and thinking only of securing the means of leading a luxurious and effeminate life. It was also insinuated that the enormous wealth which they had secreted in their vaults would be better placed in the king's hands, and that he was at liberty to take it from them. To his lasting disgrace, Philip listened to this evil counsel, and determined to ruin the Order, in spite of its manifold services to Christendom.

[A.D. 1307.] On the same day and at the same hour, with the same secrecy in every province throughout the kingdom, the Templars were seized by the king's orders, and transferred from their luxurious palaces to dark and gloomy dungeons. They were accused of dreadful crimes, and loaded with chains ; many of them also were subjected to frightful tortures, which were then

the usual means employed to compel an accused person to confess what was desired. The greater number of them, overcome by pain and hoping to escape death, confessed all that was required of them. But Jacques de Molay and many of his companions, after languishing in prison for years, preferred death to a false confession. In vain they were threatened with death by burning, to which apostates from the faith were always condemned; they chose rather to mount a funeral pile prepared for them on one of the islands of the Seine [A.D. 1314], where a statue of Henry the Fourth now stands. As soon as they saw the flames rising round them, they began to chant in a loud voice the service for the dead; and their voices were distinctly heard until the flames had suffocated them one by one. It is said that the venerable Jacques de Molay, who had in vain protested the innocence of his brethren, when at last the flames rose above his head, uttered a terrible summons, calling upon the King Philip to appear at the judgment-seat of God before the year was over! The crowd surrounding the pile were terror-struck, it is said, when these awful words were uttered by the dying man; and Philip the Fair, who regretted, when too late, the cruelty and injustice with which he had treated the Templars, was taken ill, and died before the year ended. Thus the prophecy of the Grand Master was fulfilled.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

ENGUERRAND DE MARIGNY.

From A.D. 1314 to A.D. 1316.

PHILIP THE FAIR left three sons, of whom we shall speak hereafter, as each, in his turn, became King of France.

The eldest of these princes is commonly called Louis the Tenth, or "*Le Hutin*"—that is, 'the quarrelsome and obstinate'—although he did not live long enough to show himself either the one or the other. As soon as he came to the throne [A.D. 1314], he was anxious to be consecrated at Rheims, where the ceremony could not be celebrated without being followed by splendid entertainments of every kind and the distribution of large alms to the people. This, of course, required money; and when the new king inquired into the state of his late father's treasury, he found to his grief and dismay that it was nearly empty. He sent immediately for Enguerrand de Marigny, who had been the confidant and treasurer of King Philip; and ordered him to state what had become of the wealth which his father had taken from foreign merchants and of the treasures which had been found shut up in the vaults of the Templars.

Enguerrand, who was a skilful and experienced statesman, could, if he had chosen, have given the young king all the information he desired; for he had himself been instructed by Philip the Fair to spend enormous sums of money at different times on military enterprises. But he was afraid of exciting the displeasure

of his new master by dwelling on the useless extravagance which had so often exhausted the royal treasury in the last reign. In fact he had many enemies, who were jealous of the favours with which Philip the Fair had loaded him in his lifetime as a reward for his services; and amongst the most bitter of these was Charles, Comte de Valois, the brother of Philip the Fair, and uncle of Louis the Tenth, to whom, it must be confessed, Enguerrand had not always shown respect and deference.

The Comte de Valois, seeing his nephew greatly displeased at finding himself poor, when he had imagined that he should have enormous treasures at his disposal, easily persuaded him that Enguerrand had appropriated to himself part of the king's riches while the keys of the royal coffers were in his hands. These base insinuations soon had their effect upon Louis; he had Marigny thrown into a dungeon in the palace of the Temple, and ordered that he should be kept in custody there till he had restored the enormous sums which he had embezzled. In vain did the unhappy man protest his innocence, and entreat to be allowed to speak to the king, declaring that a few words would be enough to justify him. His request was obstinately refused by his accusers, who surrounded the king; and he was treated with such severity that even his wife was forbidden to visit and comfort him in prison.

We have seen before how many errors and superstitions were at this time spread abroad in all classes of the nation; and, although in the reign of Louis the Tenth the French were beginning to be less ignorant than formerly, (as the schools of Paris afforded instruction to many,) nevertheless, people of education still believed in witchcraft, which, in our time the most simple countryman would blush to think of for a single moment. It was supposed, for instance, that magicians possessed the art of making little wax figures resembling the person whose death was desired; and that then, if a needle was stuck into the heart of

these dolls, those whom they represented would gradually pine away and die. Louis the Tenth, though still quite young, was in a very weak state of health ; and at this time he seemed to be fading away before the eyes of those around him. The Count of Valois took advantage of this to accuse Enguerrand de Marigny's wife of having made use of witchcraft, in the hope of saving her husband ; and the poor lady was accordingly thrown into prison. Then Enguerrand's accusers begged the king so earnestly and so persistently to have justice done upon the man who had conspired against his life, that this prince, weak in mind and ill in body, at last consented that the innocent man should be brought out of his dungeon, and hanged upon a gibbet which had been lately constructed near Paris, for the punishment of of felons. When he had accomplished this iniquitous act, he tried to obtain money by selling to the serfs the liberty which the commons and burgesses of his dominions had so long enjoyed. But he found the poor people had not enough confidence in their king to give up to him, for such a promise, the small competence which they had amassed by hard labour. So this expedient to replenish the royal coffers did not succeed.

Another means which Louis the Tenth made use of to get money for the state treasury, was to follow his father's example, and force foreign merchants to pay him every year large sums of money. It was only on this condition that he allowed them to continue their trade ; and if they did not fulfil it, they were likely to see their goods plundered and their houses burned down by the emissaries of the king.

[A.D. 1316.] Louis did not long survive his father's unhappy favourite, dying a few months after Enguerrand de Marigny ; not, indeed, from the witchcraft of the lady of Marigny, who was soon restored to liberty, but of a slow and painful disease, from which he had suffered for some years.

The Count de Valois did not die as peacefully as the king his

nephew. As soon as his hatred against De Marigny was satisfied, he recognized the enormity of the crime which he had committed in falsely accusing an innocent man. Accordingly, he lived in the bitterest remorse, ordered magnificent funeral rites for his victim, and commanded that prayers should be said for the repose of his soul in a chapel which he had built for the purpose, according to the custom of the Church of Rome.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE SHEPHERDS.

From A.D. 1316 to A.D. 1328.

[A.D. 1316.] LOUIS THE TENTH left only one daughter, named Jane; but a few months after his death the queen, his wife, brought into the world a little son called John, who is usually placed in the number of the kings of France, although he only lived five days. Then the lawyers consulted together and discovered an old Frank custom called the Salic Law, by which women were forbidden to reign in the Salic lands: and, comparing the crown of France to a domain, they declared that it could not belong to the Princess Jane, and that the second son of Philip the Fair, the brother of Louis the Tenth, was the lawful heir. That prince, therefore, came to the throne under the title of Philip the Fifth, and was surnamed the Long, on account of his tall figure. The peace of the kingdom was much disturbed in this reign by troubles which might have been avoided in a more enlightened age.

[A.D. 1320.] Some monks who had left their cloisters, had gone through the country preaching a new kind of crusade. Instead of resorting, as Peter the Hermit had done, to the Pope and the lords, they proclaimed that the Holy Land could only be delivered by the shepherds and the poor in speech, as they called those who were living in complete ignorance. Their preaching produced a prodigious effect upon the country people, who assembled in crowds to listen and to accompany them. The men and boys who kept flocks were amongst the first to follow the movement; and soon the new crusaders found themselves joined by many thousands. The name of shepherds (*Pastoureux*) was given them, because the greater part of them belonged to this class. At first they only formed processions barefoot, with a large wooden cross borne before them; behind this they walked two and two in silence, begging for bread at the gates of the churches and monasteries. But in a short time they entered the towns and cities and reached even Paris, where their entrance was marked with all kinds of disorders. They forced open the prisons to set free any of their members whom they found confined there, ill-treated the provost who was the chief magistrate of that great city, and committed great excesses against the Jews, whom they hated as the authors of our blessed Lord's death.

You know that since the capture of Jerusalem by the Emperor Titus, the Jews have been scattered all over the world, and have never again been united in one great nation, like that which in ancient times inhabited the Holy Land. The number of them in France was at this time very considerable. For many years their condition had been most miserable, as they were exposed to all the insults of the populace. Yet many of them had managed to amass great wealth by trade, of which they had almost a monopoly in these times; and Philip the Fair and Louis the Tenth assimilated them with the Lombards and other foreign merchants by granting them help and protection, on condition

that they should pay a large sum of money every year to the king. On this wealthy community the Pastoureaux discharged the vials of their wrath, pursuing them with rage as if they had been wild beasts, slaughtering them without pity and sharing their spoils without any scruple.

It is said that forty or fifty of these unhappy people, not knowing how to escape the malice of their persecutors, took refuge in a high tower and defended themselves there for a long time with stones and sticks. When these weapons were exhausted they threw down their own children upon their assailants ; and at last, beside themselves with misery and despair, they directed the youngest of their number to kill them all to the last man, and not to open the gates till he alone survived. He did as he was commanded, and, at last, allowed the "shepherds" to enter the place of desolation. Even their cruel hearts were struck with horror, and they drew back shuddering from the sight. But the madmen who had made religion the pretext for such unheard-of cruelty did not really profit by the plunder of their victims. For Philippe le Long ordered his officers in Languedoc, for which the depredators were now making, to pursue them and shut them up in the plains near the sea there ; and thus they perished miserably of cold and famine.

The treasury of Philippe le Long was not better filled than that of his brother had been ; and his one thought was somehow to replenish his coffers. Amongst the counsellors who surrounded him were some unscrupulous men to whom any means seemed good if they were likely to be profitable ; and you will now see what plans they thought of to procure for the king the money for which he was so greedy.

There were then in France a great many men and women suffering from an incurable disorder called Leprosy, which the Christians in the time of the last crusades had brought with them from the East, where the uncleanly habits of the people had

rendered it very common. The disease, which is most disgusting and unsightly, was highly infectious ; the lepers were therefore obliged to seclude themselves in their own houses and to live absolutely separated from other people. In many towns in France lazaret-houses were built to receive them. Suddenly a report was spread that a great number of wells and fountains in the kingdom had been poisoned by the lepers. It was believed that the wife of one of them had been seen to throw into a river a little bag containing the head of an adder, the feet of a toad, and the hair of a man soaked with some black fluid ! That such things should be thought to poison a river seems to us ridiculous ; but the ignorance of the people was still so great that many persons did not hesitate to believe it was so. Without ascertaining if any of those who had drunk the water of the fountains said to be infected had suffered from it, or even if the thing was possible, Philippe le Long, whose one thought was to get money, ordered the judges to have all the lepers seized and burnt alive as poisoners. Many Jews were included in the persecution, as accomplices in the pretended crimes of the lepers ; these were burned to death and all their wealth was confiscated by the king. But, although scarcely thirty years of age, Philip could not long enjoy the riches which he had gained by the sufferings of so many miserable people ; and while all France shuddered at these dreadful events, he sank under a fatal illness, which was regarded by many as a just punishment for his avarice and cruelty.

He reigned only five years ; and there is very little to say about the reign of his brother, Charles the Fourth, who succeeded him, and was surnamed "the Fair" as his father had been before him. He died without a son, and as it was once more decided that the Salic law excluded women from the throne of France, Philip de Valois, cousin to the last king, and son of Charles, Comte de Valois, succeeded to the crown of France.

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE FIRST OF THE VALOIS.

From A.D. 1328 to A.D. 1347.

THE reign of Philip the Sixth, or Philip of Valois, the successor of Charles the Fair, may be said to be one of the most memorable in French history. It must be admitted that by his want of foresight, and perhaps by his pride, this king brought great trouble on France, and that under him the country suffered great reverses. Still the magnificence and pomp with which he surrounded the throne endeared him to the French nobles, who in his reign entirely ceased to be turbulent and insubordinate, as they had been under the early Capetian monarchs. You will, of course, remember Eleanor of Guienne, whom Louis the Young had been obliged to divorce on account of her haughty disposition and ill-conduct, and how she revenged herself by almost immediately marrying the heir to the throne of England, and bringing him, as her dowry, the Duchy of Aquitaine, which then comprised the greater part of the provinces situated on the left bank of the river Loire. From this time forward the Kings of England had retained these provinces, under the title of "Dukes of Aquitaine," which placed them in the foremost rank among the great vassals of the French Crown. When Philip of Valois ascended the throne of France, he found that of England occupied by the chivalrous Edward the Third; and immediately summoned him to appear at Paris within a very short time, and do him homage for the province of Guienne.

[A.D. 1329.] But Edward was one of the first warriors of his time, and as proud as he was courageous : he was, therefore, very unwilling to kneel to his suzerain, and swear allegiance according to the feudal custom. At last, however, he embarked for France with a large retinue of English knights, and presented himself before the new King, who was also surrounded by a numerous and brilliant court.

In the ceremony of swearing allegiance to a feudal lord, the ancient custom was for the vassal to advance bare-headed, without sword or spurs, and to kneel at the feet of his suzerain. This humiliation the King of England could not make up his mind to endure, and considered the King of France as no more than his equal. So, instead of kneeling, he stood bolt upright before the throne, and in this position, uttered in a loud voice his promise to be a true liegeman to the King of France ; and then instantly returned to his own dominions, filled with anger at the humiliation which he had endured, and resolved to exact speedy vengeance for it.

As war was plainly imminent, Philip at once made secret preparation for it. Edward, however, appeared for a while to have forgotten his plans of invasion ; and, perhaps, might have done so for ever, if Philip's enemies had not in the following manner rekindled his resolution.

One day, as Edward was holding a high festival among his nobles, Robert of Artois suddenly entered the hall. Robert was the brother-in-law of Philip, and had been stripped by him of his possessions, and banished from France on suspicion of having attempted by magical arts to destroy the King's eldest son. As his character was vindictive and implacable, he had never ceased, since his banishment, to excite the enemies of Philip against him ; flattering himself that with their help he might return to his native country, and recover the estates and castles which had been taken from him. He was therefore vexed to see that

Edward seemed to have entirely forgotten the warlike designs that he had formed against the King of France. Accordingly he entered the banqueting-hall, followed by a band of musicians, and bearing in his hands a silver dish, upon which was served a roasted heron. This bird is the worst eating possible ; and was held to be symbolic of cowardice and inactivity, as the peacock was of dignity and honour. Accordingly, as the musicians played, Robert advanced with a firm step towards Edward, knelt down before him, and presented him with the heron, which the King accepted with a very bad grace, knowing well that it was intended as a reproach for his inaction. Rising, therefore, from the table, he swore, in the presence of all his Court, that before the end of the year, Philip should see him in France blotting out with fire and sword the memory of the affront he had just received. As the King swore, all the English knights rose to their feet with enthusiasm, and called Heaven to witness that they would follow their master wherever he was pleased to lead them. It is said that one of these knights, Sir Walter Manny by name, swore to keep one eye constantly closed with a black patch till the French were conquered ; and that from that moment he kept his word. Nor had the year closed when Edward appeared upon the coast of Flanders with a large number of vessels, surprised the French fleet in the port of L'Ecluse, and [A.D. 1340] succeeded in utterly destroying it. Thus began the long and sanguinary struggle between the two countries to which has been given the name of the "Hundred Years' War." For many years hostilities were carried on, without any decisive results, in Flanders and Guienne ; but in 1346 the King of England landed in Normandy with a formidable army, and marched unopposed, and with great rapidity, to the very gates of Paris. From this point, however, he was forced to retreat in haste ; as King Philip resolved not to abandon his capital to the enemy, and brought up by hasty marches a force much superior to that

of the English. Edward then retired, step by step, till he reached Crécy, a village near Abbeville, where, from the neighbourhood of the sea, he was sure of gaining support from his fleet.

A great part of the English army was placed under the command of the Black Prince, Edward's eldest son. He was only sixteen years old, but had shown courage and readiness not unworthy of such high trust, and the King intended that on that day he should win his knightly spurs. Scarcely had the Prince arranged his troops upon the hills which surround Crécy, when he heard that Philip was advancing with overpowering numbers to the attack. This news was received in the English ranks with the profound calmness which is always a presage of victory. In the French army, on the contrary, all was haste and passion, in spite of a long and painful march of many miles along roads rendered nearly impassable by heavy rains. Leaders and private soldiers were alike eager to fight ; even the feudal lords set their vassals an example of wild and thoughtless impatience. In the very front of the French army stood a division of Genoese archers, celebrated for their courage and professional skill. These were now ordered to advance and begin the battle ; but, to the surprise of all, they replied that the rain had relaxed the strings of their crossbows, and made them, for the present, entirely useless. Angry at the answer, the nobles around the King cried out that the Genoese were traitors, and should be swept from the face of the earth ; and, suiting the action to the word, they charged their unlucky allies, and killed a large number of them ; thereby adding, of course, immeasurably to the confusion of their whole army, of which the English took instant advantage. Yet so stern was the French resistance, and so terrible the loss which they inflicted, that a messenger was despatched to the King of England to tell him that the Black Prince was in extreme danger. Edward, however, with unshaken courage and firmness, asked if his son were dead. The answer was, "No, sir, he is

fighting bravely in the very front of the battle." "Then let us leave him alone," said the King; "the honour of the day shall be his; let the boy win his spurs."

Nothing could exceed the bravery displayed on both sides in this dreadful battle; but the headlong vehemence of the French was no match for the cool and steady courage of the Black Prince and his advisers, aided as it was by the terror of the English artillery, which was used in this battle for the first time, and struck the utmost terror by its ravages: yet the French formed their shattered ranks again and again, till the repeated discharges forced them at last to abandon the field.

One of those who fell at Crécy was John, the blind King of Bohemia, to whom Philip of Valois had granted an asylum in France. The old man, seeing that all was lost, and resolving not to survive such a disaster, begged that at least he might be placed where he might have a chance of striking one good blow against a victorious enemy. Accordingly four of his knights tied their horses to his, two on each side; the five then made a desperate charge together, and were all afterwards found dead upon the field. Similar courage was displayed by Frenchmen of all ranks and orders; and the next day, when the conqueror ordered the burial of the slain, it was found that they included eleven princes, twenty-five barons, twelve hundred knights, and the astonishing number of thirty thousand private soldiers.

Philip of Valois could scarcely be torn away from the field of battle, where the flower of the French nation had thus fallen. At last he fled with a small escort, and late in the evening knocked at the gate of a castle, and asked for shelter and hospitality. The commander of the castle came to the battle-ments and asked who it was who knocked at such an untimely hour. "Open," said Philip; "open your gates to the fortune of France."

[A.D. 1347.] Edward, King of England, now laid siege to the

town of Calais, and reduced it in the following year, after a vigorous and destructive resistance. Then it was that the six citizens of the town distinguished themselves by their act of self-devotion; but as this story is doubtless familiar to you, I need not repeat it here.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE BLACK DEATH.

From A.D. 1347 to A.D. 1350.

THE loss of the battle of Crécy, and the taking of Calais in the next year by the English, were not the only calamities which weighed on France in the reign of Philippe de Valois. In 1348 the country was visited by a fearful epidemic known as the Black Death, which broke out in Languedoc, and spread from thence through the whole kingdom. It is thus described by a chronicler of the time: "The mortality was terrible, and more destructive to the young than to the old; so that it soon became almost impossible to bury the dead. The attack hardly ever lasted more than two or three days; and some who had been quite well died of it with the strangest suddenness. All at once a swelling would appear at the groin or under the arms; and death was then inevitable. Some caught the disease from the mere force of imagination, others by contagion. The priest or physician who visited a sick person rarely escaped being himself infected; so that in many towns, great and small, the curates fled and left the care of the sick to monks, aided by the holy sisters of the Hôtel-

Dieu. These noble-minded women nursed the sufferers without fearing death or shrinking from the horrors of the disease. Often they died, and were replaced by others of the sisterhood; and well may we believe that Christ received into his peace those who perished in this noble task."

As constantly happens on such occasions, acts of horrible impiety, blasphemies, and profanities abounded; so as to form a dark contrast with these acts of sublime self-denial. It was actually found necessary to make a royal proclamation that blasphemers who cursed God, instead of praying to Him for relief, should have their tongues bored with a hot iron. Another frightful consequence of the plague was the persecution of the Jews. The same chronicler tells us that "as there was no famine or scarcity, but on the contrary a great abundance of provisions, it was believed that the Jews had poisoned the streams and even the air." On this preposterous charge thousands of them were burned alive in both France and Germany, much as the lepers had been destroyed in the reign of Philippe le Long.

We may here observe that similar scenes of horror have been enacted in nearly every country where attacks of the plague have appeared. There seems to be a kind of necessity to make *some one* responsible for a calamity which has no apparent cause; and the Jewish community was always close at hand, and collected in its peculiar quarter of each city, so as to offer the readiest mark for vengeance. Hence the infinite horrors which fill the more recent history of this unhappy people. It was not seen that undrained streets, the want of good water, and the fetid condition of the houses, were causes all-sufficient to account for the utmost violence of the Black Death; although its victims were not less than 50,000 in Paris itself, and could scarcely be numbered in the rest of the kingdom.

At last it died out, but only to make way for other scourges; and left France utterly prostrate, and unable to carry on the war.

Philip, therefore, obtained from his conqueror a truce for seven years ; and died before the end of it, overwhelmed with regret for the past and anxiety for the future.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE BATTLE OF THE THIRTY.

From A.D. 1350 to A.D. 1356.

THE eldest son of Philip de Valois was named John. He was a good and brave prince, who had fought courageously in many battles against the English ; and now ascended the throne with the title of John the Second ; because John, the infant son of Louis le Hutin, who only lived for five days, was, nevertheless, reckoned amongst the kings of France. He was surnamed the Good, on account of the kindness which he showed even to the humblest of his subjects ; but this did not save him from a life even more troubled and anxious than his father's.

Although a truce of seven years had been agreed upon between Edward the Third and Philip de Valois, and, therefore, neither of these princes could themselves take up arms, yet the war was really going on in various provinces, and the barons and nobles of the two nations fought with unabated rancour. It was thus that the French and English barons kept alive the quarrel existing between the two nations : but, if they continued to hate each other, it must be allowed that they learned at least to appreciate one another's valour.

It may be wearisome to you to read of the ceaseless wars and battles of every kind with which the history of France is filled, and I know they cannot possess much interest for you ; nevertheless you must not be left in ignorance of one celebrated feat of arms which took place in Brittany in King John's time, and which will serve to show you, better than any description I could give, the spirit and character of men in those days.

Robert de Beaumanoir, a Breton noble, on hearing that an English commander of great renown was stationed near his castle, sent him an invitation to come with thirty English knights and fight against the same number of Frenchmen. Such challenges were very common among the warriors of these days, and were never rejected. Accordingly a place of meeting was chosen near the town of Ploermel, in Brittany, and the champions all entered the lists on the appointed day, sheathed in armour, with their war-horses barbed like themselves.

In the first shock, many knights on both sides were unhorsed, and the struggle was as terrible as might have been foreseen from the well-known courage of the combatants, so that for many hours victory wavered between the two parties. In the middle of the conflict, the lord of Beaumanoir was grievously wounded, and thirsty from loss of blood, so that he was on the point of retiring from the conflict. But as he was turning his horse, one of his comrades cried out to him, "Drink thine own blood, Beaumanoir, and then thy thirst will be quenched." The brave Breton, animated by these words, redoubled his efforts, and at last the French were victorious ; eight English knights lying dead upon the ground, and the others surrendering at discretion. This ferocious and indomitable courage need not surprise us, when we remember that the whole lives of gentlemen at this time were given up to military exercises, and that war was their only occupation.

Meantime King John, even from the moment of his accession,

had been surrounded by enemies, the bitterest of whom were the members of his own family. Charles D'Evreux (called the Bad), King of Navarre, and grandson on the mother's side of Louis le Hutin, had married the King's daughter; but, instead of attaching himself to his father-in-law and serving him loyally, this wicked man conceived the most furious jealousy against a Spanish nobleman named de la Cerda, to whom John was much attached, and whom he had raised to the dignity of Constable, which was the highest rank in the French army. So ungovernable did this hatred become, that he at last sent some assassins to an inn where he knew that la Cerda was to stop, and made them surprise and murder him while asleep. [A.D. 1354.] At the news of this cowardly action, the King was filled with indignation against Charles, and swore that he should be banished for ever from his presence; before long, however, the princes and princesses of his family threw themselves with one accord at his feet, and obtained for the murderer permission to reappear at Court. But this weak indulgence made Charles still more disposed to take part with the King's enemies in any scheme which they formed against him. He was continually speaking ill of his father-in-law, and is said to have entered into a secret league with the King of England, to open a way for him into France.

A few years before the events of which I have just told you, the inhabitants of the beautiful province of Dauphiné (separated from Aquitaine by the Rhone) had entreated Philip to receive them as his subjects, on condition that his eldest son Charles should take the title of Dauphin. Philip had granted their request, whence the custom that the king's eldest son should always be so styled. Charles was now about eighteen years old, and showed many signs of wisdom and goodness. He was also most affectionate to his brother-in-law and namesake, Charles the Bad, whom he believed to be led astray by evil counsellors rather

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made to take them from their homes as soldiers. By degrees, however, they grew accustomed to this new state of things, and resolved to profit by the opportunity thus afforded them of placing before the King their various grievances and oppressions.

Having thus called together the States-General, King John claimed from them, according to custom, the means of making war upon the English; and the States granted his demands on condition that he abolished certain abuses of which the people, both in town and country, had for many years complained. For instance, there was an old custom that, when the Court arrived at any place, the King's officers should take from the houses of the inhabitants all the beds and other articles of furniture which they might require, as well as the horses and mules necessary for their conveyances. By this mode of oppression (which was called the "droit de prise"), it sometimes happened that great part of the inhabitants of a town or city were ruined in a single day. The States-General, amongst other grievances, did not fail to make this injustice known to the King; and, as he could do nothing without their co-operation, he assured them that for the future no such practice should be sanctioned; it was, however, a long time before it was entirely abolished.

On these conditions, the deputies of the kingdom consented to allow King John to raise a considerable army of foot-soldiers, and also a large number of men-at-arms, completely equipped and well-mounted. They also voted him a large sum of money, by means of which he engaged to defend the kingdom against the English.

[A.D. 1356.] The King then advanced upon the Black Prince, who was marching from Guienne towards Paris; and the two armies met near Poitiers—the place, as you will remember, where Charles Martel had formerly defeated the Saracens. The French were at least five times more numerous than the English; and the Black Prince, brave as he was, paused before he decided to expose

himself and his army to the danger of being overwhelmed. His hesitation did not, however, last long, and he set his army in order of battle on a low hill, which could be approached only through a lane bordered with thick fences. Up this the French recklessly charged, under a destructive fire from behind the hedges on each side. Accordingly, when they reached the open ground on which the enemy stood, they could only present a weak and broken line, which the English men-at-arms easily rode down. John himself, with several of his sons, fell into the hands of the English; and an overthrow ensued such as France had never known till then. The valour of the King availed nothing; nor that of his gallant son, Philip Duke of Burgundy, who earned on that day, at twelve years old, his honourable surname of "le Hardi." Neither the steadiness of the infantry, nor the impetuous valour of the men-at-arms, could hinder the rout from becoming total.

King John was led before the Black Prince, overwhelmed with fatigue, and with a wound on his face, after having given up his sword to a French knight, whom he found amongst his enemies, so that it might not be said that he had surrendered to an Englishman. The conqueror showed himself to be as generous after the victory as he had been brave while the fight lasted. He respected the misfortunes of his illustrious captive, and waited upon him at table, saying that he did not feel worthy to sit by so great a prince and so illustrious a general. King John was first taken to Bordeaux, the chief town of the Duchy of Guienne, and then to England, where he lived many years, always treated with the respect due to his high rank and noble character.

After this event, a cloud of sorrow hung over the whole kingdom. It seemed that misfortune had begun to reign over France with the house of Valois; and there is a story which relates that on the fatal field of Poitiers, the French soldiers were heard to sing for the last time the warlike song of the ancient Paladin, Roland.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

STEPHEN MARCEL.

From A.D. 1356 to A.D. 1364.

[A.D. 1356.] *WHILST* King John was a prisoner in England, the Dauphin Charles took the title of Regent of the kingdom. He was, as we have already stated, a wise and good prince; yet his merits were not at first appreciated by the malcontents of the kingdom, because, after the battle of Poitiers, instead of rallying around him the fragments of the French army, he judged it better to leave this care to his generals and hasten to Paris, where it was necessary to take suitable measures before the news of the defeat produced disorder and rebellion.

In the midst of the general discouragement with which these unexpected reverses had struck every one, Charles found it most difficult to face all the dangers which threatened the kingdom. He earnestly desired to remit to the English without delay the required ransom for the King his father; but the enormous preparations made for the war which had ended so disastrously had quite exhausted the resources of the kingdom; indeed, the King of England set so high a price upon the liberty of his prisoner, that the Dauphin despaired of ever being able to raise the required ransom. He thought of assembling the States-General again at Paris, for the country of the Langue d'Oil, and at Toulouse for that of the Langue d'Oc, telling them of all the misfortunes which had befallen the kingdom since the preceding year, and entreating them to unite their efforts with his to provide a remedy

for such heavy disasters. This was done ; but the States-General, who had seen in a few months the complete loss of the army and the money which they had entrusted to King John, did not feel disposed to make any fresh sacrifices. Among them, however, were a few men of the highest patriotism and most determined energy, who now assumed the whole burthen of the national defence. Chief among them were Robert Lecoq, Bishop of Laon, and Stephen Marcel, the provost of the Paris merchants, that is to say, the chief magistrate of the capital. These two good citizens knew very well that instead of employing the money committed to his care in raising soldiers and preparing for the chances of war, King John had been so weak as to distribute a great part of it to his courtiers, who were for the most part as greedy of gifts as they were useless to the country ; yet they bore up manfully against the calamity, and left nothing undone to guard against the future.

On the news of the defeat of Poitiers, Marcel's first thought in his capacity of provost of Paris, was to put the capital in a state of the best possible defence ; accordingly, he repaired the walls surrounding it, and hung across the entrance of many streets a number of heavy iron chains to prevent the enemy's cavalry from penetrating them. Thus whilst the terror-stricken country people saw bands of brigands of every nation burning down their cottages, slaughtering their cattle, and carrying away their children, the Parisians, under the shelter of their strong walls, found themselves safe from the attacks of the enemy, and blessed the foresight of their energetic chief.

But a worse scourge was impending over the country. The people had been plundered and killed in all directions by a horde of plunderers, who added to their injuries the most stinging taunts and insults. "Give Jacques Bonhomme a cuff if you want to get anything out of him," was the saying current among them ; and, as it often happens, this insulting expression created deeper

indignation than even the greatest acts of tyranny and oppression. Accepting the title thus contemptuously given them, the people rose in mutiny and began a series of rebellions called the "Jacqueries." Their predatory bands ravaged the neighbourhood of Paris, plundered the castles, devastated towns and villages, and declared war to the death against all the barons, whom they looked upon as the authors of their misery, because they had made no effort to help them. This peasant war, which happened during King John's captivity [A.D. 1358], was far the worst of all the public misfortunes; indeed Paris itself was threatened with starvation, as none of the ordinary supplies of food could be brought into it.

The first step taken by Lecoq and Marcel was to petition the Dauphin for the punishment of the courtiers who had wasted the subsidies granted to King John. The Prince was unwilling either to grant this request or to quarrel with those who made it; he therefore tried evasive promises, a course which excited the indignation of Marcel and the citizens to such a pitch, that they resolved on opposing to the Dauphin his brother-in-law, Charles the Bad, the same King of Navarre whom King John had imprisoned in the Louvre; he was accordingly taken out of the prison where he had languished for many years and presented to the people of Paris as the liberator of the kingdom, whose government would be sure to cure all the maladies of the state. He was undoubtedly the most formidable adversary who could possibly be raised up against the Dauphin. From this moment the States insisted more decidedly than ever that the Dauphin should give up to public vengeance the officers against whom Lecoq and Marcel had brought complaints. He allowed himself to be taken to the Hôtel de Ville, under the pretence of reassuring the frightened Parisians by his presence; and there two of his most faithful servants were killed before his eyes, and so near him that their blood was sprinkled upon his clothes. Charles himself would have been in the greatest danger, had not Stephen Marcel, in order to shield

him from the fury of the populace, obliged him to cover his head with his own hood, and to show himself thus to the people, who hailed him with a thousand acclamations. The hood, half red, half blue, which Marcel placed on the Dauphin's head was a head-dress adopted by the inhabitants to distinguish friend from foe ; and there were then very few Parisians who had not adopted this symbol, some from attachment to the popular cause, and others from simple terror. The Dauphin's two officers, who had been so cruelly murdered before his eyes, were barons of Champagne ; and their peers besought the Dauphin not to allow such a crime to go unpunished. In order to put into his hands the means of revenge, they begged him to leave Paris, where the real king was Charles of Navarre, who was constantly haranguing the people and rousing them or quieting them as he pleased ; Charles consented to retire on condition that the barons pledged themselves to join him in punishing the Parisians, and above all Stephen Marcel, whom he looked upon as his mortal enemy. Under these circumstances the Provost, foreseeing the great dangers which threatened Paris and the cause which he had embraced, hastened to ally himself with the King of Navarre, and proclaimed him General-in-Chief of the kingdom. But the Parisians began, within a few days, to suspect that Charles the Bad, under the pretence of serving the cause of the people, was secretly trying to be reconciled with the Dauphin, and that he had even assisted that prince with troops to exterminate the Jacques. They therefore took away his title, banished him from the city, and forbade Marcel to receive him within the walls again.

Meantime the Dauphin was drawing near the capital with some soldiers brought to him by the barons of Champagne ; it was impossible to take it by assault, as every citizen had armed himself for resistance ; he therefore contented himself with blockading it, so as to stop the supplies of food and reduce its population to

famine. Then Marcel, unable to bear the sight of the people's suffering, resolved on opening the gates of the city secretly to the King of Navarre, on condition that he should bring in the corn and cattle which the Dauphin's soldiers were excluding. In pursuance of the agreement, Marcel went at midnight to one of the gates; but, just as he was about to open it, up came a troop of burghers headed by an alderman named Jean Maillard; this officer himself struck down Marcel, who declined to give him any reason for being there with the key at that hour, and his companions were all slain along with him. This murder immediately changed the whole aspect of affairs; the popularity which Marcel had enjoyed so unreservedly during life was changed at once into furious hatred; his body was first dragged through the street by the mob, then torn in pieces and thrown into a sewer. Having lost his chief supporter, Charles the Bad was now obliged to seek his fortune elsewhere; and the Dauphin re-entered Paris, where his presence was the signal for order and tranquillity.

It has sometimes been said that Marcel, in thus perishing, was justly punished for deserting the Dauphin and joining his enemies; but it would be unfair so to judge the conduct of this energetic man in thus coming forward, at a time of such extreme peril, for the preservation of his fellow-citizens; even his act in inviting the King of Navarre back to Paris is not incapable of defence, so terrible were the sufferings of the Parisians, and so impossible did it seem to abate them by any other means.

The internal peace was scarcely re-established after these storms, when a new tempest burst over France. The King of England advanced nearly to the gates of Paris, and compelled the Dauphin to sacrifice everything in order to avoid the complete ruin of his kingdom. He asked and obtained from Edward the Third an inglorious peace; which, however dearly bought, might give repose to Europe and liberty to his father. The treaty which thus terminated this long and disastrous quarrel was signed in

1360 at Bretigny, a small town between Paris and Étampes. It confirmed to the English the possession of a part of their conquests, especially that of Calais and of the Duchy of Guienne; but the article most important to the King of England was one which provided that he was henceforth free from vassalage to the crown of France.

As the sum paid for King John's ransom was very much below the enormous amount required by Edward, it was agreed that he should give as hostages, until the money was paid, several noblemen and rich wealthy burghers of his kingdom. At this price the liberty of returning to France was granted him. But he enjoyed it for only a few years; for, on returning to England in order to propose to his old enemy, Edward the Third, that they should unite [A.D. 1364] in a crusade against the Saracens, he was taken ill in London, and died in a few days.

More than twenty years after John's death, Charles the Bad, whose hatred against his father-in-law had contributed so much to the calamities of his reign, himself perished in a most fearful manner. Having been attacked by illness, he was ordered by his physician to recruit his failing strength by wrapping himself in a cloth saturated with spirits of wine. This was done; and, while he was thus enveloped, an attendant carelessly brought the flame of a lamp so near as to touch him. His wrapper caught fire, and the prince was burnt to death before it could be extinguished.

CHAPTER XL.

THE CONSTABLE DU GUESCLIN.

From A.D. 1364 to A.D. 1380.

ON the death of King John, the Dauphin succeeded his father with the title of Charles the Fifth. In his reign there was a knight in Brittany named Bertrand du Guesclin, who was one of the men of whom France had most reason to be proud. In his early years he was so devoid of the usual graces and attractions of childhood, that his parents looked with something like terror and disgust on the son who was afterwards to shed such glory on their family. His figure was thick-set and ungraceful, his shoulders high, his head ill-proportioned, and his features ordinary ; thus, had it not been for the extraordinary expressiveness of his look, it would have been hard to recognize in the child the presence of the gifted and energetic spirit which really animated him. "I know very well," he often said—"I know that I am deformed, and shall never be a favourite with the ladies ; but, anyhow, I shall know how to make myself feared by the King's enemies." He had the kind of fierce temper which threats and punishment only irritated, especially when those who had the care of him made the mistake of endeavouring to mortify his pride and humble him. When this happened, the passionate child became wholly unmanageable, and would arm himself with a stout stick, and strike at any one who had offended him. Happily for him, his parents understood the necessity of trying to subdue his temper to docility by gentle means ; and in this

attempt they at last succeeded, for Bertrand had really a noble and generous heart, although its goodness was so long undiscovered. Yet he never could be persuaded to learn to read, and the tutor who was appointed to teach him was obliged to give it up.

It was, however, by no means rare in those times, to see a knight or nobleman ignorant of his letters ; indeed, warriors in general looked upon learning as only fit for monks and lawyers, and thought it quite enough if they knew how to ride and wield a lance. Thus, from his earliest years, Bertrand lived only for military exercises and war. His mother, who loved him tenderly, used to complain bitterly of his pugnacious temper, and often said that he was the naughtiest boy in the world, always getting hurt himself or hurting some one else, always beating or being beaten.

One day the poor lady was telling her troubles about her boy, with many tears, to a nun with whom she was intimate ; when suddenly, as if stirred by a presentiment, the visitor called the troublesome child to her, and, after looking at him very earnestly for some time, "Do not complain, madame," said she, "that God has given you such a son ; for one day this child will be the glory of your house and of the whole kingdom." It was hard for the poor mother to believe in this prediction ; it was, however, fulfilled in a wonderful manner, as we shall presently see. Meanwhile the turbulent and imperious character of little Bertrand did not win the affection of the children of his own age, nor indeed of any reasonable people ; all feared, hated, and, if possible, avoided him. It was the custom at that time to celebrate games where knights from the neighbouring courts came to fight against each other with sword and lance. These games were called Tournaments, and the faces of the combatants were generally hidden by the vizors of their helmets, and often they charged one another so roughly, both on horseback and on foot, that one or

more of the combatants were left dead upon the field. Such a tournament was proclaimed in Bertrand's neighbourhood when he was just seventeen years old; and the Seigneur du Guesclin was one of the first to prepare for it. The boy pressed to be allowed to accompany his father; but was refused, both on the ground of age and for fear that his violent temper might discredit the family.

Bertrand therefore remained at home sorely against his will, and feeling sure that his strength would enable him to match any opponent. At last the idea struck him that he would mount an old horse which had been left in a corner of the stables, and go to the tournament without anybody knowing who he was. He had no idea at first of coming forward in the lists; but when he heard the sound of the trumpets, his heart began to throb with eagerness within him, and he could not control his desire to try his strength and skill. It chanced that one of the knights, after doing his devoir honourably, had retired into a neighbouring house to rest after his fatigues. Bertrand followed this gentleman, and throwing himself at his feet, besought him so earnestly to lend him a suit of armour and a horse, that the good knight, touched by the youth's ardour, reluctantly acceded to his request. As soon as he was equipped, he lowered the vizor of his helmet, in order to avoid recognition; and, obtaining permission from the judges to enter the lists, he in a few moments overthrew several of the bravest warriors there. Already he was proclaimed conqueror, and was about to receive the prize, when another knight advanced, to challenge him in his turn. The young man was just preparing for an encounter with this new antagonist, when he recognized in him his own father. He instantly sprang from his horse, threw himself at his father's feet, and entreated his blessing. The knight raised his son with tears of joy, and every one praised him more for his filial devotion than for the victories which he had just won.

The prize of courage, which his prowess well deserved, was accorded him by unanimous consent; but he accepted it only on condition that he might be allowed to share it with the kind friend who had lent him the horse and armour.

From this time Bertrand was constantly occupied in war. According to the custom of the times, every nobleman had his special war-cry; and Bertrand chose for his, "Notre-Dame Guesclin." This cry, as long as he lived, was a signal of defeat to the English, and all other enemies of France. So frequent were Du Guesclin's victories, that the King appointed him [A.D. 1370] Constable of France—that is, Commander-in-Chief of the whole army—and through his courage and skill the disasters of Crécy and Poitiers were almost entirely retrieved.

Amongst the many misfortunes which the long wars with England had brought upon France, one of the chief was the large number of soldiers of all nations ready to sell their swords to any one who would pay for them, but far less anxious to fight against the enemy than to ill-treat and plunder the poor. These "routiers," as they were called, formed themselves into bands or companies of adventurers, the commanders of which were French and English noblemen; and this undisciplined soldiery became a scourge which no one seemed able to resist or get rid of. In order to accomplish this indirectly, Du Guesclin, whose courage and strength made him feared by these terrible men, was ordered by Charles the Fifth to lead many of the companies into Spain under the pretext of war, but in reality in the hope that they might be exterminated there. Unhappily, this object was not attained; as, after a short campaign, in which considerable successes were achieved under the Constable's command, the "routiers" returned to France, under different chiefs, and continued their ravages for nearly fifty years. It would be impossible to relate here all the great services rendered by Du Guesclin to France: in larger histories you will read more about this great

man, and learn to honour him as he deserves, for showing, in every position of life, that he could be as generous to his friends as he was fearless and brave. He was at last [A.D. 1380]



DEATH OF DU GUESCLIN.

seized with a fatal illness, whilst laying siege to the castle of Randon, in Languedoc, which was in possession of the English. He soon perceived that he was dying ; so, calling to his bedside,

the chiefs of his army, he took leave of them with much affection, and begged of them never to forget, in whatever country they might be fighting, that churchmen, women, children, and poor defenceless people ought never to be treated as enemies. Just when he had breathed his last, the governor of the castle of Randon came and laid upon his bier the keys of the fortress, so as to testify to the world how even his enemies could respect and honour his memory.

Charles the Fifth has been surnamed the Wise, on account of the prudence with which he repaired the disasters of the preceding reign. It was by his express desire that the body of Du Guesclin was borne to the vaults of Saint Denis, to be buried among the kings of France and their families. The people whom he had always protected with his sword gathered in crowds along the roads by which his funeral procession was to pass; and many tears were shed as the body of the great Constable was carried to its last resting-place.

The King only survived for a few months the general who had served him so nobly; and when he died in 1380, the kingdom was deprived, almost at the same moment, of the two men who were alone able to preserve any order or tranquillity.

To Charles the Fifth is attributed the foundation of the large and splendid library in Paris, which is now the most valuable in the world. As instituted by him it contained only nine hundred manuscripts (which, however, was then thought a considerable number), and was kept up in a single closet at the Hôtel de St. Paul, on the right bank of the Seine below Paris, a mansion of which hardly a vestige remains at the present day.

CHAPTER XLI.

THE MADNESS OF CHARLES THE SIXTH.

From A.D. 1380 to A.D. 1422.

THE history of the house of Valois is almost invariably the history of the misfortunes of France ; but no period was more disastrous than the reign of Charles the Sixth, the eldest son of Charles the Wise, who ascended the throne on the death of his father.

[A.D. 1380.] He was only ten years old when he became King, but appeared to possess many excellent qualities of mind and heart ; but he never was permitted to achieve the good which his natural gifts seemed to promise.

From his earliest infancy he was surrounded with jealous relations and bitter enemies ; and the people suffered terribly before the King was old enough to govern himself. His majority, therefore, was looked forward to with eagerness ; for no one could foresee the dire calamity which was to come on this unhappy monarch.

He had always been somewhat timid and retiring, because his four uncles, the Dukes of Anjou, Berry, Burgundy, and Bourbon, whom his dying father had appointed as his guardians, had, from personal motives, entirely neglected his education, that they might the more easily reign in his place. He had also a remarkably excitable temper, which rose to actual madness, in consequence of the following strange event :—

[A.D. 1392.] One day the King, who was still quite young,

was marching to carry on the war in Brittany, whose sovereign had tried to kill the new Constable, Olivier de Clisson ; and he was passing through a dense forest, followed by his retinue of knights when a half-naked man darted out suddenly from the middle of the wood, and, seizing the bridle of the King's horse, cried out in a terrible voice, "Back, sir, back ; you are betrayed !" The King's attendants ordered him to begone, but he followed for an hour, still shouting the same ill-omened words. Charles was evidently struck by them, and pursued his way in gloomy silence, which none of the lords who were with him ventured to break. In the King's train were two young pages, whose business it was to carry his lance and shield. One of these boys dropped asleep as he rode, from the intense heat of the day, and let fall the King's lance, the point of which fell with a crash on his companion's helmet. Startled by the sound, which seemed to him to be connected with the mysterious warning, Charles drew his sword and rushed headlong at the men nearest him, four of whom he cut down in a moment, and was only disabled from doing more damage when an attendant sprang on his horse and grasped both his arms from behind. He was then gently lifted down and laid under an oak, where he fell into a heavy sleep, which lasted several hours. Then he awoke ; but his attendants saw with horror that their master's reason was utterly gone. The King of France was thenceforward a melancholy maniac. Physicians were summoned ; but their art was unavailing, and they could only declare that the King had been bewitched. Sometimes he had lucid intervals, in which it was necessary to devise for him a variety of amusements. For this purpose playing-cards were invented ; the courtiers also arranged masques, and other such diversions. On one of these occasions the King and several of his nobles had disguised themselves as satyrs, the hairy coats of these wild men of the woods being represented by loose twists of tow. Thus disguised, they mingled with the

dancers, and every one hastened to make way for them. Scarcely, however, had they reached the centre of the crowd, when some one in joke held a lighted torch to one of the satyrs. The tow instantly caught fire, and the flames spread rapidly from one to the other, the King alone escaping, as a young lady had the presence of mind to throw over him a large cloak, which prevented any spark from reaching him. His unfortunate companions, meanwhile, ran up and down with piercing shrieks for help ; but no one could succeed in putting out the flames in which they were enveloped. Four of them died on the spot in the most fearful agony, and the fifth only escaped death by plunging into a large tub of water which stood in a neighbouring room. As to the unhappy Charles, this dreadful occurrence agitated him so fearfully, that in a few days he had a fresh fit of madness, and from that time forward his feeble mind had only short and fitful gleams of intelligence.

Charles had been married early in life to a German princess, whose name is mixed up in many of the melancholy events of this time. Isabella of Bavaria was young, beautiful, and accomplished, and had been received in France with the utmost enthusiasm ; her solemn entrance into Paris in 1389 being celebrated by festivities which appeared to augur a happy and prosperous reign. But the queen soon disappointed the hopes which her first appearance had raised ; her youth and beauty concealed a selfish and revengeful disposition ; her elegance and grace were fatal to France from the inclination to extravagance which they fostered in her, and which the treasures collected by Charles the Fifth could hardly satisfy ; and her undoubted talents were applied to an endless series of plots and intrigues.

When Isabella became certain that her royal husband's malady was incurable, she banished from the King all his most faithful adherents, shut him up in the gloomiest part of the palace, and only allowed one servant to wait upon his unhappy master, who was often

left naked and miserable, while she herself indulged in all kinds of splendour and luxury, foolishly supposing that she would thus amuse the people and calm the general discontent. They did not, however, forget their King ; but offered up unceasing prayers for his cure, giving him as a sign of their love and compassion, the affectionate title of " Charles the Well-beloved."

Charles had two sons by this unhappy marriage, who were still very young ; the elder of them was named after his father, and was the acknowledged heir to the throne as Dauphin of France. Some of the faithful barons, at the head of whom was the Count d'Armagnac, the Constable of France and one of the most powerful lords in the kingdom, assumed the care of this child, and tried to protect him against his unnatural mother ; meantime two great nobles, Louis Duke of Orleans the King's brother, and the formidable Duke of Burgundy, John the Fearless, were struggling with bitter mutual hatred for the possession of the regency during the King's illness. John was the son of Prince Philip, who had fought so bravely by his father's side at Poitiers. Queen Isabella would greatly have preferred the young and gay Louis to the Duke of Burgundy, whom she thoroughly distrusted ; but John was so well known for the violence of his temper and the power of arms, that she was afraid to irritate such an enemy, and even induced the Duke of Orleans to make a formal reconciliation with his cousin. These two nobles, hating one another as much as ever, were induced to embrace one another before all the court, to receive the Holy Communion together, and on the following night to sleep in the same bed, the last being in those times, an acknowledged sign of sincere reconciliation. But the very day after this public profession of friendship, which was looked upon as full of promise for the tranquillity of the kingdom, the Duke of Orleans left the queen's palace at about eight o'clock on a dark November evening, mounted on a mule, and escorted only by two squires riding the same horse, and four or five valets on foot,

who carried lighted torches to show the way through the dark streets of Paris. Suddenly a troop of armed men surrounded the Duke, crying, "Death ! death ! death !" Alarmed at this cry, the Duke's people, with the exception of one squire, all hastened onward and abandoned their master in his hour of need. The Duke himself, unable to believe that this miserable attempt was directed against him, advanced to the strangers and said to them, with perfect calmness, "I am the Duke of Orleans." The murderers recognized his voice and fell upon him ; in an instant his head was struck off by the blow of a battle-axe, and the faithful squire who alone remained near his master received many wounds in attempting to shield the Duke's body with his own ; the assassins then fled under cover of the darkness, and were not recognized.

In the first moment of bewilderment which this murder caused, no one knew to whom to attribute such a crime. The Duke of Burgundy, clothed in the deepest mourning, was present with the other princes at the funeral, and seemed to share the general grief. But a few days later a report was spread that in spite of the darkness of the night, some servant of the house of Burgundy had been distinguished among the murderers ; and there was then little doubt that John the Fearless was the author of this crime. This report became so general that the Duke of Burgundy, seeing that he was suspected, no longer attempted to deny what he had done ; he then retired into Burgundy, and prepared to meet the effects which he expected from the people's indignation. There was not a heart in France that was not touched with the deepest sympathy for Valentina of Milan, the widow of the murdered prince and the mother of several young children, whom the crime of John the Fearless had made fatherless. The noble lady, in spite of her overwhelming grief, had the courage to come to Paris with some of the little princes, and to throw herself at the King's feet imploring vengeance for her wrongs. Charles happened at this moment to have an interval of reason, and

could fully understand the disasters which had befallen his house. He was melted at the sight of the Duchess's tears, and, kindly raising her from the ground, he promised that he would see justice done. Perhaps he might have kept his word, had not the shock of what had passed so affected his brain that he soon after relapsed into a state of hopeless insanity. The unhappy Valentina was deprived of all hope by the King's madness, and died shortly after, solemnly charging her sons never to look on the face of their father's murderer.

Meantime silence and exile had become intolerable to John the Fearless ; and, as soon as the first impression of his crime grew fainter, he did not scruple to send to Paris a famous doctor named Jean Petit with a commission to demonstrate, by a speech delivered in the large hall of the Hôtel de Saint Paul, before the assembled princes, barons, and lords of the court, that he had been perfectly justified in causing the death of his cousin the Duke of Orleans. The discourse was interlarded, after the fashion of the time, with numerous quotations from the Bible ; but it utterly failed to persuade the assembly, or to abate the horror with which the Duke's crime was universally regarded. Accordingly, without any further attempt to extenuate his wickedness, John the Fearless returned to Paris, where he armed the butchers of the city as a kind of body-guard, and thus bade defiance to the vengeance of his enemies ; for his satellites became the terror of the whole town, and were known by the two names of "Flayers," and "Cabochiens ;" the one derived from their trade, the other from the name of their leader.

While John the Fearless thus remained sole master of Paris, and ruled the kingdom by shedding the blood of the best men upon the scaffold, or by giving them up to the Cabochiens, a new trouble was at hand, which was to be the climax of all the misfortunes which France had endured. An English army, headed by Henry the Fifth, the third king in succession from the famous

Edward the Third, landed in Normandy and advanced to the banks of the Somme, where a bloody battle was fought between the French and English near the village of Agincourt, a name now as sadly celebrated in French history as those of Crécy and Poitiers. The English gained a complete victory, the flower of the French nobility perishing on the field, and the greater part of the kingdom being, in consequence, given up to the enemy. At the same time, the King's two eldest sons, who had by this time grown into manhood, both died of disease within a few months of each other; and the title of Dauphin descended to a very young prince named Charles, who (strange to say) was destined once more to raise up the royal power, overwhelmed as it was with so many reverses. Queen Isabella, who had at first fled, that she might not fall into the hands of the Duke of Burgundy, now determined on a reconciliation with that prince; and, in order to give him a pledge of her sincerity, she delivered up to him the Comte D'Armagnac, and many of the King's and the Dauphin's most devoted servants. The Dauphin would doubtless have fallen a victim to the odious policy of his mother, if a brave citizen named Janneguy Duchâtel, who was Provost of Paris at the time, had not saved him from the danger. This good man carried him to the Bastille de Saint Antoine, one of the powerful fortresses of the capital, and soon after conveyed him to a town at some distance, where the remaining friends of his family hastened to join him. The Dauphin, who was scarcely seventeen years old, now decided, on the advice of those who surrounded him [A.D. 1419], to meet the Duke of Burgundy, and confer with him on the best means for putting an end to the miseries of France.

The place chosen for the conference was the bridge of a little town called Montereau, near Paris. From a mutual feeling of distrust (which, indeed, was but too well founded), it was arranged that the two princes should arrive at the same moment at the

place of meeting, each with a train composed of a fixed number of knights and barons. But at the very moment when the two princes stepped upon the bridge, and were advancing to meet one another, a man unknown to all, or not recognized in the tumult, darted upon the Duke of Burgundy, and killed him on the spot with the blow of a battle-axe. The poor young Dauphin fainted away at this fearful spectacle, and was removed before he recovered consciousness.

No one could believe that the Dauphin was capable of ordering the assassination of John the Fearless, although the Duke was his determined enemy, and had himself set the example of such a crime by the murder of the Duke of Orleans. Queen Isabella, however, who had lost her chief support by the death of the Duke of Burgundy, did not scruple to declare that her son was guilty of this act of treachery. In her resentment against him, she actually allied herself with the enemy, gave her own daughter, Catherine, in marriage to Henry the Fifth, King of England, and opened the gates of Paris to the English, who remained there as masters for more than fifteen years. She also kept Charles the Sixth in close captivity. He remained a hopeless lunatic, but did not long survive the misfortunes of his country, of which he did not understand the full extent. When he died in 1422, the royal treasury was so completely exhausted that it was absolutely necessary to sell part of the furniture and plate of the crown, in order to defray the expenses of the funeral, which took place at St. Denis.

The people shed many tears as they followed to his grave their miserable King, whose misfortunes had caused those of the country. As soon as he was laid in the tomb of his ancestors, the officers of the household broke their swords and reversed their arms ; while some, who had been seduced from their duty by Queen Isabella, cried aloud, " Long live Henry of Lancaster, King of France and England."

CHAPTER XLII.

JOAN OF ARC.

From A.D. 1422 to A.D. 1435.

THE great river Loire divides, as you know, France into two parts; in each of which are many beautiful provinces and cities. The Dauphin, who at his father's death, in 1422, succeeded to the crown as Charles the Seventh, was obliged to retire beyond it, because the English had occupied Paris, and taken possession of three-fourths of the kingdom. His enemies, therefore, called Charles, the "King of Bourges;" as this was the only city of any importance which still remained in his power. Never before had a King of France been reduced to such a miserable condition, as the successor of Charles the Sixth. He possessed neither arms nor treasure, and lived only upon the gifts of a few faithful towns, without guards or servants, except a few generous and devoted men, who gave up everything to follow the fortunes of their King. However, in all the length and breadth of France, the people were fully persuaded that the crown belonged of right to the son of Charles the Sixth; and the burgesses and commons only waited for an opportunity to expel the English and open their gates to their lawful sovereign. No steps, however, had been taken in this direction; and deliverance seemed as far away as ever, when an event, perhaps the strangest and most striking which history has ever recorded, changed in a moment the whole state of affairs, and ultimately rescued France from the rude hands of the invader.

In the village of Domrémy, in Champagne, on the banks of the Meuse, lived a humble peasant girl named Jeanne d'Arc. Her father was a respectable labourer, who from her earliest youth had inspired his daughter with sentiments of goodness and magnanimity. The villagers of Domrémy were on the side of the Armagnacs—that is, of the enemies of England and of the Duke of Burgundy, and were never weary of lamenting the fate of Charles the Seventh, whom they still called only “the gentle Dauphin,” as he had not yet been crowned, so as to be really King in their eyes.

One summer's day, about noon, Jeanne was alone and at work in her father's garden, when a bright light suddenly appeared to shine round her, and she seemed to hear a melodious voice whispering in her ear. At first she felt much frightened ; but the voice spoke with such religious sweetness, constantly exhorting her to pray much to God, and to go often to church, that her fears were soon dispelled, and she firmly believed that the mysterious voice came to her from heaven.

Another time she was taking care of her flock in the fields, when the same voice was heard, and she saw before her a vision of many beautiful angels. One of them, she said, looked like a good brave knight ; he had wings on his shoulders, but there was no crown upon his head. Around him were gathered an immense number of heavenly beings ; and a soft light surrounded them on all sides. Jeanne was much frightened at the vision ; but took courage on hearing herself kindly addressed by the heavenly visitor : “I am the archangel Michael,” said he, according to the account afterwards given by Jeanne ; “God has resolved to compassionate the realm of France, and has chosen you, Jeanne, as his instrument, to deliver it from the English ; you shall conduct the Dauphin to Rheims, and there he shall be consecrated King of France, as all his ancestors were before him.”

At these words Jeanne burst into tears, and replied that she

was a poor peasant girl, who did not know how to mount a horse, or lead an army to victory. But the angel, she declared, at once reassured her, and ordered her to present herself before a baron in the neighbourhood, who would conduct her to the King. He also promised that she should accomplish her journey both safely and happily. Still Jeanne was too timid to venture on undertaking the mission thus assigned to her; and it was not till after the vision had appeared to her again and again, that she decided to obey its call. Every time it was heard, the voice entreated her to follow its counsel, assured her that God would be her help, dwelt upon the miseries and sufferings of the French people, and excited her compassion more and more. From this time Jeanne became thoughtful and melancholy, and began to retire more and more to lonely places; and many a time she was found on her knees, praying most earnestly to God. Meanwhile the English, who had very nearly subdued the whole kingdom, laid siege to Orleans, one of the largest cities on the banks of the Loire, and not far from Bourges, where Charles had taken refuge.

From that time forward the heavenly messenger appeared oftener to Jeanne, and it seemed to her that three times every week he repeated that she must go to the King. At last, unable to resist the appeal any longer, she resolved to obey, in the hope that God would give her help in her enterprise. After overcoming a host of difficulties, she at length found a protector in the Seigneur de Baudricourt, by whom she was forwarded first to the Duke of Lorraine, and afterwards, permission being first obtained, to the King himself at Chinon. Yet, even when she was so near the court, she was obliged to press over and over again for admission to the royal presence. When at last she obtained it, the prince is said to have directed that she should be brought into a large hall, where he stood, simply dressed, in the midst of his courtiers, and concealed by them. However, she advanced without the least hesitation, and threw herself

at his feet. She then, without any timidity or hesitation, declared that she had a divine mission to raise the siege of Orleans, and to lead Charles himself to Rheims, where he was to be consecrated as all the kings of France had been before him. Those who heard this girl of seventeen speaking with so much confidence were at first inclined to think that she had lost her reason. However, she persisted in her demands, and said that all she required was a horse and armour ; for that with these she would lead the soldiers to victory. Almost at the same moment a strong entreaty for help was sent from Orleans ; and, as no other means of relieving it could be found, the Dauphin's advisers resolved that it might be well to grant her request ; though in their hearts they had little or no faith in her mission.

The bravest of the French warriors were now ordered to act with her, particularly Dunois, the King's cousin, and two brave knights named La Hire and Xaintrailles. Charles himself gave her a complete suit of armour ; her sword was fetched from an ancient tomb in the church of St. Catherine of Fierbois, where her visions had told her that it would be found, forbidding her at the same time to use any other weapon ; and she had a white banner, ornamented with fleurs-de-lis, which, in moments of danger, she carried in her own hands. Thus equipped, she marched for Orleans ; and, although she passed close to their position, the English were too panic-stricken to molest her. On the succeeding days she stormed one by one the "bastilles," or redoubts, which the enemy had built in order to blockade the town. While the last of these was being attacked, the citizens burst forth in swarms across a broken bridge, which was hastily repaired for the purpose ; and, struck with terror at the sight of such a mass of enemies, the garrison became incapable of resistance, and were all put to the sword. Thus, by the relief of Orleans, the first half of Jeanne's mission was finished ; and she

had now to accomplish the second by conducting Charles to be crowned at Rheims.

In order to effect this, it was necessary to march through the parts of France most thoroughly occupied by the English; but



JEANNE D'ARC AT ORLEANS.

such was the terror of Jeanne's name that no resistance was made. The coronation duly took place, Jeanne standing, with tears of joy, beside the throne during the ceremony. As soon

as it was over, she begged that she might be allowed to return to her native village, as her mission was now accomplished, and she had no belief that God intended to use her services any farther: moreover, she longed to be restored to her former life, and to rest from toil and warfare. The King, however, insisted that she should remain with him, and at last she promised, though reluctantly, never to leave him till the English were driven out of France.

The war, which still continued to rage with the greatest bitterness, gave Jeanne fresh opportunities for gaining victories over the English, and taking from them the towns which they occupied; but it was remarked that she grew daily more and more melancholy, and often talked of her home and her aged father. At the same time her countrymen began to think, as it would appear, that her work was done, and that she was not likely to accomplish more; accordingly, they became careless of her safety, and, in attempting to defend Compiègne against the Duke of Burgundy, she was captured by the enemy without any attempt being made for her rescue. Her trial as a witch soon followed. It was concluded, under the ultimate direction of the English generals, by Pierre Cauchon, Bishop of Beauvais, whose see was in the English territory. Day after day she was tormented with questions of the most insidious character, to which she constantly replied with the most perfect simplicity and gentleness. But all was in vain; she was condemned as a sorceress, and burned alive in the market-place of Rouen. Let us thank God that the times are so long past when a crime like this could be committed, and end this most pathetic history by remarking that the one reward for her services for which Jeanne ever asked was that her native village should be excused from taxation; and that, accordingly, the entry in the royal registers against the name of Domrémy continued, even up to the Revolution of 1789, to be, "Rien à cause de la Pucelle."

The King of England was no longer the famous Henry the Fifth, to whom the gates of Paris had been opened by the treachery of Isabella of Bavaria, and who had obtained posses-



JEANNE D'ARC IN PRISON.

sion of the greater part of France by the victory of Agincourt. He had been succeeded, in 1422, by his son, a child of nine months old; accordingly it was in the name of this infant

that the murder of Jeanne was perpetrated. From that day forward the English power in France declined with ever-increasing rapidity, and, as we shall see, was soon ended for good and all. It is remarkable, too, that, as soon as it ceased, the English turned against one another, in the civil wars of the Roses, the arms which had so long devastated France—that the noble families who had waged the “hundred years’ war” in that country were almost annihilated in battles like those of Barnet, Wakefield, and Towton, and in the executions which followed them; that Henry’s son, the young and noble Edward, Prince of Wales, was murdered by his uncles at Tewkesbury, and that finally the King himself perished in prison, having been probably murdered by his rival for the throne.

Charles the Seventh seemed at first indifferent to the miserable fate of Jeanne, to whom he had owed so much; and even the favours granted to her family and to the village of Domrémy were a scanty acknowledgment for such unparalleled services. As to the wicked Isabella, to whom the greater part of the troubles of this time has been justly attributed, the success of the son whom she hated seemed to strike her with a mortal illness. [A.D. 1435.] Abandoned by the English, she expired amid the curses of the whole people of France; and, in order to avoid the popular fury, it was necessary to convey her body by night, in a covered boat, along the Seine to the vault of St. Denis, where it was buried, with scant ceremony, by monks wearing masks, in order that they might not draw indignation on themselves by being known to have done even thus much for the mother of their King.

CHAPTER XLIII.

LOUIS XI.

From A.D. 1435 to A.D. 1483.

AFTER the victories described in the last chapter, Charles the Seventh continued the work of the Maid of Orleans by reannexing to the French dominions the magnificent province of Guienne, which the English had held ever since the time of Louis the Seventh. Now, therefore, only the duchies of Burgundy and Brittany remained under separate rulers. The disgrace of the treaty of Brétigny was thus effaced, and the fatal days of Crécy, Poitiers, and Agincourt were in some measure forgotten. Charles the Seventh in his later days also put an end to the ravages of the companies of adventurers, by organizing them *into* regular bands of infantry and cavalry under the *names* of "Ordnance Companies," and "Free Archers."

This was an act of consummate wisdom, as it turned into defenders of the country a number of its most mischievous and destructive enemies; and by effecting such a change Charles well deserved the title of "Victorious," which was bestowed upon him by his grateful people. We may safely say that in his reign the French monarchy attained a power and dignity which it had not enjoyed since the days of Charlemagne; yet his last days were embittered by the conduct of his son the Dauphin Louis, who at the age of eighteen showed a disposition at once gloomy, harsh, and turbulent. He was known to be encouraging some of the rebellious nobles who fretted at the restraints imposed on them by the crown, and longed to be as free to do evil as in the

old feudal days, and more than suspected of aiming at the dethronement of his father.

Charles however, discovered the designs formed against his crown and life; and nothing could exceed his grief when he learned that his own son had taken part in the most guilty projects of the rebels. However, he controlled his feelings sufficiently to order the Dauphin to come to him in private, and after having reproached him for his faults, he granted him a generous pardon on condition that he should break off all intercourse with those who had misled him.

Any other son than Louis would have been touched with so much undeserved kindness, and would only have thought of effacing his crime by the sincerity of his repentance.

But this prince was incapable of a generous feeling; he left his father's presence only to form plots still more audacious and undutiful, and finally withdrew to the province of Dauphiné, which belonged to him as heir to the crown, and where he could pursue them with greater safety. Soon afterwards, not feeling himself safe even there, he sought a refuge with his cousin Philip the Good, who was the son of John the Fearless and had succeeded to the dukedom of Burgundy. A residence was assigned to him in the ancient city of Dijon.

While living there, he heard, in 1462, of his father's death. In his last illness Charles had been persuaded by his servants that he was in danger of being poisoned either in food or medicine. Accordingly he persisted for days together in refusing all nourishment, and died at a comparatively early age, from the weakness thus induced. The Dauphin now obtained the object of his many parricidal schemes, and began a reign which, from its refined and ingenious wickedness, is many times more odious than even the coarse brutality of the old Merovingian sovereigns, whose crimes have been recounted in former chapters.

Boldly declining all offers of support from Philip of Burgundy,

Louis the Eleventh at once proceeded to Rheims, and was crowned there without resistance, to the surprise of those who, like Philip, had thought that a prince of such odious character would never have been allowed thus quietly to seat himself on the throne.

He next made, according to the custom long established, a Joyeuse Entrée into Paris, and a description of the ceremonies then observed may serve as a specimen of the manners and feelings of the age of Louis the Eleventh. The main figure in the procession was, of course, the king himself, clothed in a violet-coloured tunic under a white satin robe embroidered with golden lilies, and wearing a hood on his head; he was mounted on a white horse covered with drapery of velvet and cloth of gold, ornamented with jewellers' work. The princes of his family, and the chief lords of the Court, followed him on horseback, and were almost equally magnificent in dress and equipment. Before the King came the mayor of Paris and the magistrates of the city, clothed in damask robes trimmed with ermine (though it was the height of summer), and an immense crowd of people thronged the streets as the procession passed through them. At some distance from the town were stationed five richly dressed ladies mounted on magnificently caparisoned horses; each lady represented one of the five letters which spelt the name of Paris, the first bearing the letter "P," the second "A," the third "R," the fourth "I," and the fifth "S." Each of them in turn made the King a complimentary speech, doubtless, to his exceeding gratification. At the gate of the city was a large silver ship, bearing the arms of Paris; it was suspended from an arch, and contained persons representing the different orders of the kingdom and expressing allegorically the virtues of the ancient kings of France. In another place the King's sportsmanlike tastes were gratified by a singular contrivance. Just as he passed, a roebuck was let loose and at once pursued by a pack of dogs with pricklers and huntsmen in the royal livery.

The cry of the hounds and all the ~~noise~~ of the chase, coming thus into the midst of a grave and solemn procession must have made a whimsical variety indeed. On all sides flutes, hautboys, and other instruments filled the air with melody ; whilst here and there fountains were flowing with milk, wine, and other beverages, so that the passers-by might help themselves as they pleased. What most charmed the King is said to have been the sight of



LOUIS XI.

hundreds of little birds released at the same moment from the cages in which they were enclosed. This was, of course, a graceful compliment to the king, as suggesting that his parental care would be sure to free his people from all their troubles and difficulties; but such auguries were sadly at variance with the real spirit of Louis's reign.

Scarcely had the new king entered upon his duties when he

saw the greater part of the feudal barons rebelling against him, as he himself had incited them to do against his father a few years previous. At their head were the chief vassals of the throne, Francis Duke of Brittany, Charles the Bold, Count of Charolais, son to the Duke of Burgundy, and Charles, Duke of Guienne, the King's brother. All these nobles joined an alliance called the League for the Public Good ; though their real object was, not to help the people of France, but to increase their own power and dominion at the expense of the King, whom, by former experience of his character, they had learned to dread. They therefore marched upon Paris with a large army, knowing that the King was at that time absent from the city ; and the gates were on the point of being opened to them when Louis's unexpected return forced them to engage under the walls of the capital, at a place called Montlhéry, in a battle the result of which was undecided. Both sides fought with the greatest fury, but, though the confederate princes remained masters of the battle-field, they were stopped before the very gates of Paris by the skill of Louis, whose politic arts easily induced them to agree to a treaty called the Peace of Conflans, which seemed to guarantee the objects for which they had taken up arms. Thus all returned home, little dreaming that they had excited undying enmity in the mind of one who never forgot an injury, and had ability and patience enough to make his final vengeance as complete and decisive as possible. His whole reign, in fact, may be described as one unceasing effort to abase and ruin the great vassals of the Crown.

Nothing could be less kingly or majestic than the ordinary dress and appearance of Louis the Eleventh ; instead of the light-blue robe, which since the days of Philip Augustus had been the usual attire of the French kings, he wore a coat of coarse cloth ; and his heavy boots were generally covered with mud or dust.

His hat was covered with little leaden images of the Virgin and the saints ; to which he used to kneel and offer his prayers

five, or six times in the course of the day, particularly on the arrival of any news, good or bad. These devout orisons did not, however, hinder him from immediately doing acts of the grossest injustice and tyranny; ordering without scruple the execution of any one whom he distrusted, or even of persons whose property he wished to bestow upon those who had been the instruments of his revenge or cruelty.

His ancestor, Saint Louis, had professed and acted upon the belief that the life of the humblest subject was inestimable in God's sight; and more recently the Maid of Orleans had exclaimed, "My very hair stands on end whenever I see a Frenchman's blood flow." What, then, are we to think of a sovereign who could imagine that acts of cruelty and bloodshed could be sanctified by superstitious prayers addressed to Him who said "Thou shalt do no murder?"

The Duke of Nemours, who was also Count of Armagnac and the grandson of the duke murdered in the time of Charles the Sixth for having taken the Dauphin's part against the Duke of Burgundy, was at this time one of the most powerful lords in the kingdom. Like so many others, he had joined in the War of the Public Good, and had been apparently reconciled to the King by the peace of Conflans. Now he imprudently excited Louis's anger by opposing the establishment of his power in the south of France, and was at once seized and condemned to lose his head. It is even said that Louis ordered his two young sons to be placed on the scaffold to witness their father's punishment; and that their clothes were actually sprinkled with his blood.

A prince of this temper could, of course, have no real friends. In fact, the only people he liked to have near him were men of very low birth, whose interest compelled them to be absolutely devoted to his service. His constant companions were his barber, Olivier le Daim (more often called Olivier le Diable), and

Tristan l'Hermite, his Provost-marshal, whom the King called his 'gossip,' and whose chief duty consisted in hanging or drowning those whom his master condemned to death. The largest share of his confidence was, however, given to Cardinal La Balue, a miller's son who had risen by his abilities and ~~craft~~ to the very highest dignities in Church and State. Unfortunately for the Cardinal, it was discovered that he had been betraying to the King's enemies the secrets with which he had been entrusted.

[A.D. 1469.] Louis's first idea was to order that his unfaithful councillor should be tied up in a sack and thrown into the Seine; but, on reflection, he thought this punishment would be too speedy, and decided on confining his victim in an iron cage strung up inside of a tower. This was done, and it was twelve years before the miserable man was set free from his frightful imprisonment. Cruel as the punishment was, our compassion for La Balue is materially diminished by the fact that he had himself invented this prolonged torture, and had often advised the King to make use of it in cases resembling his own. By such stern acts of vengeance as this, inflicted without the slightest mercy on all who opposed him, Louis in a few years made the royal power far stronger even than that of his father. In spite of his natural dislike for war, he showed courage and energy whenever he was obliged to take up arms; and, not content with terrifying the lords and barons who attempted to resist his will by the punishment of the Duke de Nemours and many others, he completed the ruin of the feudal system by encouraging the increase of the commons, and the progress of trade and the industrial arts. He also rendered to France two other undeniable services; namely, the establishment of a post-office for the transmission of letters, and the encouragement which he gave to one of the first printers of the time to establish himself in Paris.

He never for a moment neglected his self-appointed task of abasing the nobles one by one. The Duke of Brittany had ven-

tured on receiving and protecting his own brother, the Duke of Guienne, who had become his enemy. Louis at once led an



JEANNE HACHETTE.

army against him, and forced him to accept a disgraceful peace, as the price of retaining his dominions. Shortly after this the Duke

of Guienne died of poison, administered to him in a peach which he took at dessert; and so strong was the suspicion against Louis, that Charles the Bold, Duke of Burgundy, did not hesitate openly to accuse him of the crime, and to invade his territories with a large force. [A.D. 1472.] The Burgundian army advanced straight towards Paris; but it was stopped before Beauvais by the obstinate resistance to which the inhabitants of that city were stimulated by a brave woman named Jeanne Hachette, whose example led a number of other women to join themselves to the forces of the burghers, and help to repel the assaults of the Burgundian army. In memory of this heroic defence Louis ordered that a public fête should be celebrated yearly at Beauvais, in which the women of the city should take precedence of their husbands; and at the present day a bronze statue of Jeanne Hachette has been raised to perpetuate the remembrance of her courage and devotion.

For many years Charles the Bold, so named for his courage, or rather rashness, kept the King involved constantly in warfare of the most unceasing and wearisome kind. Yet Louis never allowed himself to get disconcerted or impatient; but, like a cautious bull-fighter, constantly watched for the moment when his adversary might be taken unprepared and laid prostrate by a deadly blow. This was at last delivered, but not by Louis; for Charles plunged into a mad war with the Swiss confederacy, suffered defeat after defeat, and at last was slain in 1477, at the rout of Nancy, where the Swiss were fighting as allies of the dispossessed Duke of Lorraine. Charles's body was found after the battle with the face frozen into a puddle of water, so that when lifted out of this it could scarcely be recognized. This event was, of course, most favourable to Louis's schemes, and he succeeded, without any contest, in possessing himself of the greater part of the Duke's dominions. The heiress to these was Mary of Burgundy, Charles's daughter. If Louis had

instantly resolved to treat ~~her~~ with kindness and consideration, he might doubtless have induced her to marry his son Charles ; in which case her whole territories, including Liège and the great commercial cities of ~~the~~ Netherlands, would have been at once united to France. But the arch-dissembler hesitated, unable to decide ~~whether~~ to employ friendly methods or force ; and, before he could make up his mind, a marriage was arranged between



DEATH OF CHARLES THE BOLD.

Mary and the Archduke Maximilian of Austria. Thus the golden opportunity was lost ; and we shall see in the sequel how many wars the mistake has cost since then. Burgundy proper was, however, annexed to France, dropping into the framework of the monarchy like the keystone of an arch, which binds the whole together finally and indissolubly.

From this time forward Louis might have lived and reigned quietly, if the hand of God had not been laid heavily upon him in punishment for the bitterness with which he had filled the last days of his father, and for his numberless transgressions against

the subjects entrusted to his care. As he grew old, his temper became more and more gloomy and ferocious. Every day his distrust of those around him increased, and he was always thinking of prisons and daggers. Not considering himself safe in Paris, although a strong guard, almost entirely composed of Scottish Archers, watched round the Louvre day and night, he chose for his retreat the Castle of Plessis lez Tours, upon the banks of the Cher: there he was protected by deep ditches, crossed only by drawbridges, and surrounded by triple walls which could only be entered through gates bristling with points of iron. Any unlucky traveller who infringed the rules of the place by coming too near the glacis was handed ruthlessly over to the tender mercies of Tristan l'Hermite.

In spite, however, of all these precautions, the King was constantly tortured by the fear of death, and never enjoyed a moment of repose. A terrible silence reigned around him, which no one dared to break, as the least noise threw him into a frenzy of alarm. Sometimes in the middle of the night the stillness would be suddenly broken by piercing shrieks, which the wretched king uttered under the stings of remorse for all his wicked deeds. His servants would then rush hastily to his apartment; the sound of many voices uniting in prayer being the only means of comfort of which he appeared capable. At other times, in order that his subjects might not think he was ill, he showed himself in public, carefully dressed and covered with gold and jewels, beneath which he hoped to disguise his ailing and emaciated frame. But even then no one was allowed to come near him, and he was often only seen at the end of a long gallery.

There was then in Italy a good man, named Francesco di Paula, who had lived a solitary life for forty years, and of whose sanctity many surprising tales were told. Louis was informed that the prayers of this aged man might prolong his life, and would, at any rate, calm his fears; in this hope, therefore, he

entreated that Francesco would pay him a visit. When he arrived at the Castle of Plessis lez Tours, clothed in a coarse woollen dress, the King threw himself at his feet, weeping bitterly, and crying out, "Oh, do make me well!" Francesco replied only by impressing on Louis the need of repentance for his sins, and entreating him to prepare to die like a Christian. Olivier le Daim and the royal physician, Jacques Coictier, now no longer concealed from the King that his end was drawing near; and, strange to say, the certainty seemed to give him courage. From this moment he seemed to bow to God's will; his presence of mind returned, and he set himself to put the affairs of his kingdom in good order, and arrange the minutest details of his own funeral. He ordered the officers of his household to go, even before he had ceased to breathe, and offer their services to the Dauphin his son, and a few days after this he expired in the presence of Francesco di Paula, who after having thus ministered at the death-bed of one of the most powerful kings in the world, at once returned to the desert to resume his life of poverty and holiness.

CHAPTER XLIV.

CHARLES THE EIGHTH.

From A.D. 1483 to A.D. 1498.

THE Dauphin Charles now succeeded his father Louis the Eleventh. He was, according to a contemporary historian, a gentle, gracious, and affable prince, and thus the very opposite of his father, whose gloomy and ferocious temper had made him an object of dread to all who came near him.

The fear of death which had pressed so heavily on Louis the Eleventh had been caused partly, indeed, by religious terror, but still more by anxiety as to the succession to his throne. Who was to wield that absolute power to gain which he had sacrificed everything? and would the next king carry out the plans which he himself had formed, when he could no longer hope to execute them, for the safety and welfare of his people? Thoughts like these pressed so strongly on his mind, that he could not so much as endure the sight of the Dauphin, his natural successor, but had the prince shut up, with a tutor and a few attendants, in the fortified castle of Amboise; ordering that no one should have access to him without special leave, and maintaining that there was no need to bestow any extraordinary pains on his education, inasmuch as nothing is required for a king except the power of deceiving others. Thus the Dauphin only just learned to read, and the sole subjects in which he took delight were the history of the early Crusades and the accounts of Bertrand du Guesclin and other brave champions of France. The attention with

which the young Prince listened to these narratives seemed to inspire him, from his earliest years, with a desire to imitate these gallant captains, and to become famous, like them, for deeds of warlike courage and enterprise. It is said that, on his death-bed, Louis bitterly regretted that he had neglected his son's education ; and, as we have seen, he entreated his chief officers to serve their new master as faithfully as they had served himself. No sooner, therefore, was Louis dead, than the whole court repaired to the Castle of Amboise to render homage to the Dauphin, who seemed to be sincerely affected at the loss of his father. The new king was only thirteen years old, and although, by the custom of France since the days of Charles the Fifth, kings were considered to have attained their majority at that age, Anne of Beaujeu, Charles's eldest sister, nevertheless assumed the title of Regent. She was a woman of much spirit and ability, and her imperious character was not unlike her father's. She conciliated the favour of the people by several acts of justice ; particularly by the execution of Olivier le Daim, who was accused of being accessory to more than one dreadful crime, and the confiscation of his extensive possessions. Yet many of the princes and barons, remembering how hard they had pressed Louis in the War of the Public Good, now murmured loudly at having to obey an imperious woman and a king who was a child in years. But there was really no legal ground for their discontent ; for though the Salic law excluded women from wearing the French crown, it did not forbid them from acting as Regent, when the king was too young to govern for himself. The Duchess of Orleans, second sister of Charles the Eighth, was very different in character from the Duchess of Beaujeu. Her disposition was weak and timid, her appearance unprepossessing, and her face plain and unattractive, and she was also afflicted with lameness. Her husband, Louis Duke of Orleans, was grandson of the unhappy Duke assassinated by John the Fearless, and of the

gentle Valentina of Milan. This young man had many brilliant and attractive qualities, but his boundless ambition led him to commit many faults, and, moreover, he soon became entangled in a quarrel with the Duchess of Beaujeu, whose haughty and imperious disposition he could ill brook. After trying every means to persuade her to give up the care of ~~the~~ young king, he resolved to complain to the parliament of Paris that she had usurped the Regency, which ought to have belonged to the princes of the blood royal. This assembly, however, wisely replied by the mouth of its President, "that the Parliament was instituted to dispense justice to the people, but that it could not intermeddle in the quarrels of great princes." These words are the more remarkable as, when we proceed further, we shall see that a very contrary opinion was held by succeeding parliaments, who claimed a right to interfere with the government at all points. Disappointed in the answer, the Duke of Orleans felt that he must now resort to other means; he, therefore [A.D. 1484], managed by means of a coalition of barons opposed to the Regency, to compel the King's ministers to assemble the States-General; a course which had, as you will remember, been taken during King John's captivity and at other times of peril. The present assembly, however, failed in settling the contest for the Regency; although in other respects it displayed a truly patriotic spirit, and followed the examples of affection for the people set by Lecoq and Marcel, in the last generation. Louis accordingly took up arms in 1484 against the Regent, and, under pretence of delivering the King from captivity, risked a battle at St. Aubin du Cormier, and was completely defeated, in spite of the powerful aid of the Duke of Brittany. Nearly every one who was attached to the fortunes of the Duke of Orleans perished miserably on the scaffold, and he himself was thrown into prison, where he passed three years, reflecting on his folly, and knowing that he might lose his

head at any moment for having taken up arms against the King.

Instead, however, of the terrible punishment which the Duke of Orleans would certainly have suffered under Louis the Eleventh, one of the first acts of Charles the Eighth, on coming fully of age, ~~was~~ to throw open the doors of his cousin's prison, and to receive him with the greatest kindness and affection. The reconciliation proved sincere on both sides; and from that time the Duke of Orleans became the King's most faithful friend, and was treated by him with complete confidence.

The next act of Charles the Eighth was the union of Brittany to the French crown. Since the fall of Charles the Bold this was the only independent province remaining. By the death of the Duke of Brittany, it had descended to the Duchess Anne, a lady of rare beauty and talent. She had been destined to marry the Emperor of Germany, but Charles the Eighth stopped this match (which would have given foreigners a fresh footing in the country) by becoming himself suitor for Anne. The advantage to both countries was so obvious, that she did not hesitate to accept the proposal. The marriage soon took place, and the old strife between France and its western province was happily set at rest for ever. We are informed that Charles was far from handsome, that his figure was short and ill-proportioned, his body thin and awkward, and his head too large for his stature. Yet he was so good and gracious, and so polite and attentive to his wife's least desires, that in a very short time she loved him with all her heart.

Charles the Eighth had not forgotten his early delight in the prowess and valour of the French knights of old. Thirsting for adventures which he could not hope to meet with when the kingdom was at peace, he announced [A.D. 1494], a tournament at Lyons, with a series of brilliant fêtes, to which the chief nobles of the country were invited. When all were assembled, he used

the opportunity to propose an expedition to Naples, to which the French kings had constantly laid claim ever since the days of Charles of Anjou. This proposal was received with acclamation; and the reckless nobles of France, scarcely giving themselves time to lay aside their festive garments, entered with utter carelessness on a war, the consequences of which were to last for centuries. On the first entrance of the French armies into Italy everything seemed like enchantment. The beauty of the cities was beyond anything which they had ever conceived; and they gazed in wonder at the marble churches, the splendid palaces, and the processions formed to deliver to them the keys of the great towns. In less than nine months Charles found himself master of both Rome and Naples; and it seemed as if his enterprise had already been more than successful. His army, however, had been diminished by detachments from 30,000 to about 16,000 men; and he soon found that a league was being formed against him by Milan, Venice, and the Pope; and that, unless he retreated rapidly, he would be entirely cut off from France. Scarcely had he begun his retrograde movement, when the force which he had left behind in Naples was compelled to capitulate. He himself marched northward in all haste, and encountered the army of the so-called "Holy League" at Fornovo, near Parma, where the Apennines approach nearest to the Po, and soon form the defile called the Stradella. As the enemy had beset the way, it was necessary to fight; while the pass was so narrow that it was impossible to deploy for battle, or to find any stations suitable for artillery. Yet, with stern determination, the French pressed onward, the weak lances of the Italians splintering harmlessly against the armour of their knights. The Stradiot cavalry in the Venetian service were on the point of attacking the French infantry, and perhaps annihilating them, when they were diverted by the plunder of the French camp. The result was that the pass was forced with a loss of only 200 men,

the Italians having lost not less than 4,000. A noble act of self-devotion was performed in this battle. It became known that the enemy had directed some picked soldiers to single out and assault the King himself. Accordingly, nine brave knights dressed themselves in armour exactly like his, so as to draw all such attacks upon themselves, and so divert them from their master. After his victory, Charles the Eighth had no difficulty in recrossing the Mont Genève pass to Grenoble; and the Italian campaign was at an end, with no result, except barren glory, to compensate for the loss of so much blood and treasure. Two years afterwards Charles was on the point of renewing the attempt to conquer Italy, but died in the midst of his preparations, after a few hours' illness, at the same castle of Amboise where his childhood had been passed. It is said that two officers of his household died with grief at the loss of a master so kind and generous; thus proving, if the story is believed, a degree of devotion seldom shown at the obsequies of monarchs.

CHAPTER XLV.

LOUIS THE TWELFTH.

From A.D. 1498 to A.D. 1515.

AFTER having gone in succession through so many ages of ignorance and barbarism, we have now arrived at one of the most memorable epochs in the history of the world—memorable not only for the events by which it is marked, but by the wonderful changes which had been working for some time in the minds of the people of Europe. In the course of the fifteenth century many great discoveries had been made, and many new inventions introduced. Gunpowder, for instance, is said to have been then invented by a German monk : it was first used, as you will remember, at the battle of Crecy, and its employment evidently tended to make the heavy armour of the Middle Ages useless as a defence, and the thickest castle walls assailable. Still more important was the art of printing, which was, as we have seen, so much favoured by Louis the Eleventh. This queen of all inventions changed the whole face of literature and thought. Books up to that time had been multiplied only by the manuscript labour of monks and other copyists ; now they poured in thousands from the presses, and no one was any longer obliged to remain ignorant and uneducated. Henceforward an ever increasing number of persons learned to read and devoted themselves to study ; and it is very important for us to remark that, as men became instructed, they grew proportionably better

in morals, and more refined and gentle in their temper and mode of life. A third great discovery made in the time of Charles was that of the West Indies by Christopher Columbus. This great man made up his mind, partly from the records of ancient voyages, and partly from meditating on the figure of the earth and the proportion of land and water upon it, that it must be possible to reach the East Indies by sailing westward from Spain. After innumerable disappointments, he was at length entrusted by Ferdinand, King of Aragon, and Isabella, Queen of Castile, with three tiny vessels, hardly bigger than the yachts of our own day, in order to make the desired attempt. His crews were experienced and hardy mariners; but even they became so alarmed by the length of the voyage, that they forced Columbus to promise that he would turn homewards within a few days if no discovery was made. But just before the appointed time arrived an island of the West Indian group had come in view. We cannot sufficiently admire Columbus's boldness in penetrating such vast and unknown seas under the guidance of the lately discovered mariner's compass, without being daunted even when he found that the direction of the needle, which had been supposed to be always the same, was discovered to be subject to variations, according to its position on the earth's surface. He is generally and rightly spoken of as the discoverer of America. It should, however, be remembered that he never saw the great Western continent, which was named, not after him, but after a comparatively obscure navigator, named Amerigo Vespucci.

These inventions and the discoveries consequent upon them, in a very short time brought about a considerable change in many old customs. Gold and silver were dug out of the mines in the New World, and thus became far more common in Europe. Wealth was also largely increased by maritime trade, and with it the desire for knowledge; so that in Paris and many other cities of France schools and colleges were opened, where young men from

the provinces came in crowds to receive the instruction which they now began to appreciate.

In the year 1498 Charles the Eighth died childless, and was succeeded by his cousin, Louis of Orleans. At the beginning of the new reign some of the courtiers advised the King to revenge himself on those who had fought against him and made him prisoner at Saint Aubin du Cormier; but Louis released them with the noble words, "It is not for Louis the king to avenge the injuries of the Duke of Orleans!" This answer was deservedly praised, as it showed that Louis would not make use of his power to punish those who, in fighting against him as a rebellious subject, had only been fulfilling a stern duty.

Anne of Brittany, the widow of Charles the Eighth, now wished to retire to her own dominions, and thus to avoid seeing another sovereign reigning in her husband's place. But shortly afterwards Louis the Twelfth declared his marriage with Jeanne of France, the second daughter of Louis the Eleventh, to be null and void, and proposed to the Duchess of Brittany to share his throne, an offer which she accepted without hesitation. By this marriage the Duchy of Brittany was finally united to France, from which it had been separated by the last dismemberment of Charlemagne's Empire; and we may here remark that modern France, after this addition, extended to nearly the same limits as those of ancient Gaul.

[A.D. 1501.] Louis the Twelfth soon won the hearts of his subjects by his gracious manner, and was surnamed, "The Father of his People." Too soon, however, he conceived the fatal idea of a fresh invasion of Italy, like that of Charles the Eighth, in order to assert his claims on the territory of Milan (which had formerly belonged to the Visconti, the family of his grandmother Valentina), against the opposition of the King of Spain and of many Italian princes. Accordingly he placed himself at the head of a large and formidable army, leaving the care of his

kingdom to an able minister, the Cardinal d'Amboise, in whom he placed unlimited confidence.

Amongst the warriors who followed Louis was the celebrated Bayard, to whom was given the surname of "The Knight without Fear and without Reproach." This great warrior had from his earliest youth given proofs of the highest magnanimity; unlike his predecessor, Du Guesclin, he had always been obedient to discipline, and generous in all boyish sports; besides being passionately fond of all military exercises requiring strength and skill. He was now just grown up; and after obtaining his aged father's blessing, he followed the King to Italy, and there distinguished himself by the most admirable bravery and prudence.

One day when the French army was in retreat before a very superior Spanish force, Louis had ordered, with a view to preventing pursuit, that his army should destroy a wooden bridge the moment they had passed it. Unfortunately there was not time to execute this order; and the French would have been overtaken in their retreat had not Bayard placed himself nearly alone to guard the abandoned bridge, and thus by his single courage arrested the progress of the whole of the Spanish army. After fighting for many hours in order to give the French troops time for retreat, Bayard at length retired, after receiving many wounds, and left the Spaniards perfectly amazed with the sight of such extraordinary valour. When not on the field of battle, where the courage of a lion seemed natural to him, Bayard was the gentlest of the gentle. He hated all falsehood, and was a man of the most real piety and the most boundless charity. At the capture of Brescia in Italy, where he had been foremost in the assault, his soldiers brought him a young and remarkably beautiful girl, whom they had rescued from fearful danger. She was crying bitterly for her mother, of whose fate she was entirely ignorant. Bayard was touched at her distress, and spared no pains to discover the lost mother. In this he succeeded, and afterwards took up his

quarters in her house. When orders came to march, the ladies presented him, by way of ransom, with a large sum of money; this he did not refuse to accept, but desired that, as a token of the infinite pleasure which he had derived from their society, he might be allowed to make the whole of it his contribution to the daughter's dowry. They fell at his feet in gratitude; but he bade them rise, and earnestly pressed them to keep secret what he had done for them. In spite, however, of this precaution, the fame of Bayard's action soon spread far and wide through the army; and we have therefore the pleasure of knowing an instance in which the savage customs of war as then understood were softened by the spirit of genuine kindness and chivalry.

The King himself showed as much bravery as any of his warriors. It once happened that the officers of his staff strongly urged that he ought not to risk his own life and theirs by reckless exposure in time of battle. "Let those who are afraid come behind me," replied Louis with a smile. Such an answer would doubtless pique to the utmost the military honour of the objectors; yet those who know the history of Rome will remember that when the great Scipio Africanus once saw an enemy's javelin fall at his feet, he considered that he ought to express deep shame for having so far forgotten the part of a general, on whom so many lives depend, as thus to place himself in needless dangers.

Another of the most brilliant soldiers of the time was Gaston de Foix, Count of Armagnac and Duke of Nemours, the King's nephew, and a relation of the unhappy prince of that name who had been beheaded by Louis the Eleventh. This young knight, whom Louis loved like his own son, united highly amiable qualities with the most fearless courage. But it seemed that the family of Armagnac were destined to misfortune; Gaston perished in the flower of his age at Ravenna, where he had just defeated the Spaniards. His death marks the time of transition

from French triumphs in Italy to a series of defeats and disasters which forced Louis to retreat homewards. We must needs wonder at the unquiet temper of the French people, which drew upon them at this time a series of Italian wars, nearly as destructive as the struggle with the English had been, which, in fact, watered with French blood nearly the whole of the peninsula which they were striving to subdue.

On his return home in 1510, Louis devoted himself with infinite zeal to the good of his people, who really adored him. Mounted on a white mule, he might be seen passing without attendants through the streets of Paris, listening with the greatest kindness to any one who had a request to make, and taking care to administer justice to all. Sometimes he mingled in disguise with the common people in the streets, that he might find out what was thought of his government; and thus ascertained carefully all the complaints made by the poor. It was only when justice had been done to them, or when they saw their wishes fulfilled, that they learned who it was who had taken such pains to discover and remedy their grievances. One example of this practice deserves special mention. A great nobleman had accidentally broken a poor workman's arm, and the man had not dared to complain of it. The King hearing the story, put his arm in a sling as if he were hurt, and, presenting himself before the judges, declared that he should not consider himself cured so long as the author of the injury to the poor man remained unpunished. On this the judges investigated the case, and gave sentence that the nobleman should pay first the expenses of a complete cure to the man whom he had injured, and secondly, a sufficient compensation for his pain and loss of time.

Queen Anne's benevolence equalled that of her royal husband; she united with him in all good works, and her death was felt as a deep affliction to the poor, the sorrowful, and the oppressed.

[A.D. 1514.] Louis now married the young and spirited Prin-

cess Mary of England, the sister of Henry the Eighth. In order to gratify his young bride, he consented to change the habits of his life, dining very late, and going to bed only towards midnight, instead of at the early hour to which he had been used. This way of living broke down his health, and he died in 1515, within a few months after his re-marriage, deeply lamented by the nation which he had loved and protected so diligently.

CHAPTER XLVI.

FRANCIS THE FIRST.

From A.D. 1515 to A.D. 1547.

IF the death of the good King Louis the Twelfth was bitterly lamented by the people, whose affection he had so well deserved, the same cannot quite be said of the French nobility, whose warlike and adventurous temperament had been restrained by his wisdom during the latter years of his life. Thus they hailed with joy the accession of the young Count of Angoulême, his son-in-law and nearest relation, who succeeded to the throne as Francis the First. The new king was graceful, affable, and intelligent, fond of learned men, and always desiring to attract them by his patronage to Paris from other European countries. By this generosity he encouraged science and art, a taste for which had been acquired, as we have seen, by the French in their expedition into Italy; and his reign is also memorable for

the revival of literature, which in late centuries had been little cultivated in France. This King effaced the last traces of ancient Frankish barbarism, and would, perhaps, have been the most accomplished prince in our history, had he not loved war too well, and by his passion for it brought many sorrows upon the kingdom and himself.

When he began his reign there were in Europe two powerful monarchs with whom he ought always to have maintained the most friendly relations. One of these was Henry the Eighth, King of England; the other Charles the Fifth, Emperor of Germany and King of Spain, one of the most politic and ambitious princes who ever lived. In the early part of his reign he saw the wisdom of conciliating both these princes, and adopted the following methods for that purpose. To Henry he gave an invitation to meet him at a grand tournament, to be held near Guines, in Flanders. To receive the company expected, vast wooden palaces were erected, with decorations so brilliant as to give the appearance of fairy-land. The guests themselves were so splendidly equipped, that many nobles were said to bear on their shoulders the value of whole estates, and the meeting-place obtained the name of the Field of the Cloth of Gold. The Queens of France and England accompanied their husbands, and were attended by the richest and most beautiful ladies of the two kingdoms. The kings lived in the midst of fêtes, balls, and tournaments; in fact, there was a rivalry between Henry and Francis as to which could carry magnificence to the highest point. The courtiers absolutely ruined themselves in similar attempts; and Shakspeare has given a whimsical account of the strong measures needed when the festival was over to make the English nobles abandon their foolish love of French fashions and return to those of their own country. All they got in return for their zeal was the ridicule of those whom they thus imitated, the Frenchmen saying that they did well to be proud, as they were

carrying on their backs whole parks, forests, and windmills—referring, of course, to the lands and houses which they had sold in order to pay for their summer's day of splendour. After having thus passed a month at the Field of the Cloth of Gold, the two Kings separated, mutually satisfied with their interview, and making each other a thousand promises, which they had certainly no intention of fulfilling.

The kingdom of France was at that time one of the most powerful in Europe; and if you look at a map of France as it then existed, you will easily understand its extent and strength. It now consisted of Normandy, taken from King John of England by Philip Augustus, in 1203; Languedoc, sold in 1226 to Louis the Eighth by Amaury de Montfort, after the crusade against the Albigenses; Dauphiny, reunited to France in 1343, under John the Second; Guienne, conquered in 1453 from the English by Charles the Eighth; Burgundy, added to the French dominions by Louis the Eleventh, after the death of Charles the Bold, in 1477; and, lastly, Brittany, which Louis the Twelfth acquired, as we have seen, by his marriage with the Duchess Anne. These provinces together formed one of the finest empires that had then ever been united under one head; and the overthrow of the great vassals in the previous reign had established the royal authority over the different provinces of France on a perfectly firm foundation. Francis ought, of course, to have been contented with this vast and undisputed power; but he had long entertained the idea of reviving the old claim to the Duchy of Milan, and now resolved to attempt the conquest of that country.

Full of confidence in the number and valour of the knights who marched under his banner, the restless monarch had not to wait long for an opportunity to display his courage. He crossed the Alps by the exceedingly difficult pass leading from the Durance, in France, to the Stura and the town of Coni, in Italy;

where tunnels had actually to be cut, rocks blasted, and wooden galleries carried along the face of precipices to enable the army to pass. Having thus evaded those of the enemy who were



FRANCIS I. KNIGHTED BY BAYARD.

guarding the usual passes at Susa, he marched northward, crossed the Po and Tesino, and was met at Marignano, about ten miles south of Milan, by a large army, consisting mainly of Swiss

mercenaries. The King's first thought was that he must be knighted before the battle began ; and this honour he received from the sword of Bayard, of all men in the army the most beloved. It is supposed that the Swiss might have been induced to change sides, or at least to return home and abandon the war, but for the arrival of a large division fresh from Switzerland. As it was, they resisted with the utmost valour for two whole days, and at last retired, with perfect order and steadiness, only after leaving fifteen thousand of their number dead on the field. The oldest soldiers declared that they had never seen such a carnage ; the French artillery having swept away whole ranks of the enemy, and the knights with their armoured horses having charged into the very midst of them while thus disordered.

In spite of his great courage, Francis the First was not as successful in all his battles as he had been at Marignano. In Italy the troops of the Emperor Charles the Fifth of Spain and Austria disputed inch by inch the provinces which he wished to conquer, and with them he fought many battles with immense loss on both sides [A.D. 1524]. Among the slain was Bayard himself, who was mortally wounded in an encounter on the banks of the Sesia, where he had distinguished himself by the most brilliant valour and resource. Feeling his end approaching, he begged to be placed at the foot of a tree, and prepared for death by the most earnest and simple-hearted prayer that his sins might be forgiven. He was just at the point of death when some Spanish captains who had heard of his wound hastened up and expressed their infinite sorrow at the accident. Bayard thanked the Spaniards graciously for their kind feeling towards him ; but when the Constable Bourbon, who had deserted the cause of his country and gone over to the enemy, ventured to approach and condole with him, he replied with a stern voice, made solemn by the near approach of death, " My lord, it is not I who need compassion, but you who are fighting against your king and country." These are Bayard's

last recorded words, as he expired, to the general regret of friends and enemies, within a few minutes of uttering them.

The loss of this illustrious man was but the prelude to a multi-



DEATH OF BAYARD.

tude of misfortunes which befell Francis the First. From that time all his Italian enterprises were disastrous [A.D. 1525]; and within little less than a year after the death of Bayard, the King,

having invested Pavia, found himself surrounded by a Spanish army, which Charles the Fifth had sent to raise the siege. In the battle which followed, the French army was cut to pieces; and, in spite of the extraordinary efforts of the King himself, and of the brave men who were with him, Francis fell into the power of his enemies. Since the battle of Poitiers, when King John had been taken prisoner by the English, such a calamity had not befallen France. One of the first cares of the captive King was to write to his mother, to tell her of his misfortune; for he loved her so much that he wished the sad intelligence not to reach her from any one but himself. His letter began with the remarkable words (with which I daresay you are familiar), "Madam, all is lost but honour." I need not tell you how delighted Charles the Fifth felt when his rival was brought a prisoner to Spain. At first he was not treated with the respect due to a fallen sovereign; but the Emperor presently seemed to repent of his harshness, and showed towards Francis the chivalrous politeness of which a monarch should always set an example to other men. The French King remained a prisoner at Madrid for nearly a year. The wearisomeness of his captivity, and the enforced idleness, disappointments, and sorrows, affected his health so much that if he had been kept much longer in Spain he would probably have died while in the power of his enemies; but Charles the Fifth, after requiring a heavy ransom to be paid, at last consented to restore him to liberty, and allowed him to return to his own kingdom. [A.D. 1526.]

Nearly fifteen years after this event, the two kings being on friendly terms, Charles the Fifth, who as King of Spain and Emperor of Germany had possessions in all parts of Europe, asked the permission of Francis to pass through France on a journey. [A.D. 1540.] Francis, in spite of his faults, seemed to be incapable of bearing malice, which is the fault of mean and ignoble minds; accordingly, he seemed on this occasion only

anxious to show his old rival that he cherished no resentment against him for the past. Indeed, he made preparations to receive the Emperor with the most magnificent and costly fêtes ; while Charles, who was always accustomed to deceive others, could hardly persuade himself that this sumptuous reception was not a trap into which he might fall. But he was entirely mistaken ; for the King of France was incapable of treachery, even towards his most dangerous enemy.

According to the custom of the time, there was at the Court of France a jester, called the King's Fool. This personage always wore a fanciful dress, and was at liberty to say anything he pleased without offence ; every kind of joke and satire was allowed, provided the King could be made to laugh, which, by the bye, was not always a very easy task to accomplish. The fool of Francis the First was called Triboulet, and as soon as he heard that the Emperor dared to pass through France, he presented himself before the King, bearing under his arm an immense register, and Francis, expecting some joke, asked him "what he was going to do with that great book." "I am going to write in it the names of all those who are greater fools than myself," answered Triboulet, "and I have just put down his most potent Majesty of Spain at the head of all." Triboulet, by this answer, wished to make it appear that Charles must have lost his reason, before he came and put himself into the power of his old enemy. This Francis perfectly understood ; but, as he was never angry at any joke of Triboulet's, he replied, "Well, and what will you say of me if I let the Emperor pass safely?" "Why, then I shall scratch out Charles's name in this work," replied the fool, "and I shall write in the same place that of your Majesty." At this merry jest the King was so amused that he made Triboulet a rich present, but received the great Emperor with all the loyalty and good faith natural to him. So far, however, was Charles from feeling mutual confidence in his host, that as long

as he was in France he could not sleep in peace, and quite lost his appetite.

Francis's latter days were constantly clouded with war ; as Charles the Fifth, his great rival, aimed at nothing less than the control of all Europe. At length he expired, in 1547, at the Chateau of Rambouillet, near Paris ; where a small and ruinous apartment, in the old town, is still shown as the place where he breathed his last. His son succeeded him with the title of Henry the Second.

CHAPTER XLVII.

THE PROTESTANTS.

From A.D. 1547 to A.D. 1559.

IN the early part of the reign of Francis the First, Martin Luther, an ardent and impulsive monk, openly proclaimed in Germany that many of the doctrines and practices of the Church needed reformation. He was as bold as a lion, and had, moreover, the strongest power of arresting the attention of the people by his preaching. When called to account by the Church, he refused to admit that Christians were obliged to submit implicitly to the Pope, who, as you know, was up to this time almost universally considered to be of right the supreme head of the Church. The preaching of these doctrines naturally caused the greatest excite-

ment throughout Europe ; and those who embraced the tenets of Luther were called Lutherans.

[A.D. 1536.] A few years later another learned man, named Calvin, appeared in France ; his disposition was more severe, determined, and systematic than Luther's ; and, accordingly, the Calvinistic churches provided by him in France and at Geneva were even more thoroughgoing than the Lutheran bodies in their opposition to Rome. It is unnecessary here to dwell upon the peculiarities of Calvin's teaching ; but you must remember that both the Calvinists in France and the Lutherans in Germany adopted the title of Protestants, because they " protested " against so much of the doctrines hitherto received. In a great council assembled for the purpose, Francis the First condemned many of the French Protestants to the horrible punishment of the stake, which had been suffered in former times by so many Albigenses, and also, as you will remember, by the noble Jeanne d'Arc. Those Christians who held to the old faith called themselves Catholics ; and under these two distinctive titles we shall see Christians engaged in many sanguinary conflicts, to which the strange name of " Religious Wars " has been given.

[A.D. 1547.] When Henry the Second succeeded his father on the throne of France he showed the same animosity against the Protestants, and many of these were burnt to death throughout the kingdom. But, terrible as these executions were, instead of frightening the Calvinists into submission, they seemed even to increase their numbers ; and the King soon learned that some of his most influential nobles had embraced the Protestant religion. Among the chief of these was François de Coligny, Baron d'Andelot, who had the highest reputation for courage and ability, and had rendered many important services to France. On hearing of his conversion, the King summoned him to his presence, and asked if the reports about him were true. " Sire," replied D'Andelot, " my body, my worldly goods, and my life are yours ;

but my soul belongs to God, and I will not deceive you ; I would rather die than attend the mass."

An answer so different to what the King expected made him exceedingly angry ; and D'Andelot narrowly escaped instant death. On second thoughts, however, Henry contented himself, for the present, with forbidding him ever to appear at Court. D'Andelot remained firm to his principles ; and the Calvinists, encouraged by his strong adherence to their cause, grew bolder and more uncompromising every day.

The chief supporter of the Roman Church at this time in France was Queen Catherine, a crafty and clever Italian princess, of the house of the Medici, whose real sentiments it was always difficult to find out ; for it frequently happened that the very people whom she flattered and caressed were those whom she really hated the most. Next to her in ability and influence stood the Guises ; that is, Charles Cardinal of Lorraine, and Francis Duke of Guise. These noblemen belonged to the illustrious house of Lorraine, sprung from the last descendants of Charlemagne, who were formerly expelled from France by Hugh Capet. Francis Duke of Guise had fought bravely in many battles, had repelled the armies of Charles the Fifth from the French soil, and had regained for the French the city of Calais, of which the English had held possession since the time of Philip de Valois for nearly two hundred years.

The Duke of Guise was no friend to the Protestants, and he also hated Anne de Montmorency, the Constable of France, who belonged to one of the most illustrious families in the kingdom, from jealousy of the deference which the King always paid to his opinion. The Constable de Montmorency was also the uncle of D'Andelot, who had at this time openly embraced the doctrines of Calvin.

[A.D. 1557.] Unhappily the Constable fell into the hands of the Spaniards after the battle of Saint Quentin ; and during his

captivity the Duke of Guise, who was handsome in person and insinuating in manners, contrived to make himself so agreeable to the King and Queen that they began to place implicit confidence in him. Knowing well that the King was opposed to the Protestants, the Duke represented to him that the Constable was their great hope and support, on account of his affection for his nephew, D'Andelot. Thus he succeeded in awaking in Henry's mind a feeling of mistrust against those whom he suspected of leaning to the new religion. In order, therefore, to crush them at one blow [A.D. 1559], Henry went to the Parliament, and ordered the immediate arrest of five magistrates, who were avowed Calvinists, and had expressed themselves in opposition to a royal edict issued against their faith. He directed that the trial of these men should be as speedy as possible; wishing, as he said, to see one of them, named Anne Dubourg, burnt before his own eyes. Yet Dubourg was a good and upright magistrate, whose only crime was that he had dared to speak favourably, in the King's hearing, of the doctrines of Calvin. Such was the kind of disposition produced by the influence of advisers like the Guises in a prince by no means naturally cruel. But he was not to carry out his plans of repressing Protestantism. For in the year 1559, he had arranged a marriage between his eldest daughter, the Princess Elizabeth, and Philip the Second, the bloodthirsty successor of Charles the Fifth in Spain. This event was solemnized at Paris by magnificent tournaments, at one of which the King of France received a wound in the face from the lance of a Scottish knight named Montgomery, from the effects of which he died a few days after. It is sad to hear that, for a pure accident, Montgomery was put to a death of torture, as if he had been an actual traitor and murderer.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

THE CONSPIRACY OF AMBOISE.

From A.D. 1559 to A.D. 1560.

HENRY THE SECOND left four young sons, of whom the three elder were kings of France one after the other. At his father's death the Dauphin, who was hardly sixteen years old, succeeded him under the name of Francis the Second; and, though his reign was short, it was still marked by events of considerable importance.

The new King's health was extremely feeble; accordingly, the Queen-mother, Catherine de' Medici, governed the kingdom in his name; or, rather, allowed it to be governed by the Guises, to the utter exclusion of the Constable de Montmorency, who was rewarded for all his services by a hint to retire to his estates. This ingratitude to such a noble veteran excited a very general indignation, and especially irritated the Protestants, who had for some time expected to be led to victory by the Constable.

In order to conciliate public opinion, the Guises began by some salutary measures; but soon their ambition and pride became unlimited. As a sample of their disposition, the following strange tale is related. The King had taken a journey to Fontainebleau, and this attracted thither an innumerable crowd of petitioners from all parts of the kingdom, some claiming reward for services, others hoping to get their offences pardoned. As the concourse became annoying, the Cardinal of

Lorraine had the audacity to raise a gibbet under the very windows of the palace, and to proclaim, by sound of trumpet, that all petitioners must leave the town before sunset under pain of immediate execution. There could be no mistake as to the origin of this preposterous announcement ; and with murmurs not loud but deep, the assembly dispersed, each whispering to his neighbour, that in the good old times Frenchmen had been their king's comrades ; but that now, on the contrary, it seemed that they were to be his slaves.

At the age of thirteen, Mary Stuart, the daughter of James the Fifth of Scotland, and, through her mother, Mary of Guise, the niece of the Duke of Guise and the Cardinal of Lorraine, had been married to Francis the Second. Those who see her portrait at the palace of Holyrood, as she appeared a few years after this, will have no difficulty in believing all that is said of her extraordinary beauty and grace, as well as of the vigour and determination of her character. At the time immediately succeeding her marriage, she was too young to take any prominent part in politics, but was, from her winning qualities, the idol of the French public. It may be easily imagined what kind of training she would be likely to receive under the auspices of such a mother-in-law as Catherine de' Medici ; and we shall see what bitter fruit this bore in after days.

At this period, and for many years after, the belief in astrology was very strong in France and the neighbouring countries. It was considered that the fate of every one is determined by the position of the stars at the moment of his birth ; and, moreover, that coming events can be discerned by similar observations. It is most astonishing that, even when astronomy had shown that the motions of the stars are guided by the most regular laws, and that a person instructed in this science can calculate beforehand with absolute certainty what will be their position at any moment, however remote, people still managed to believe that great events

might be thus foretold. Accordingly Louis the Eleventh had constantly consulted an astrologer named Galeotti; and we find even Charles the First of England sending a large sum of money to one, in order that he might discover a favourable moment for his escape from captivity. But no prince was ever more besottedly devoted to astrology than Catherine de' Medici. For at every turn of her affairs she used to take the advice of an Italian named Ruggieri, and had built a kind of tower for him to observe the stars from, partly occupying the site of the present Corn-market at Paris.

When I related to you the death of Bayard, in the reign of Francis the First, I also incidentally spoke of the Constable Bourbon, who, at the time when it happened, was bearing arms against his country under the standard of the Emperor Charles the Fifth. This nobleman was nearly related to the royal family; and on his death in 1527 his property had been confiscated on account of his treason. Thenceforward the members of his house were poor, and out of favour at court. At the time of which we are now speaking, there were several princes of this family. The eldest was named Antoine de Bourbon, and the youngest Louis, Prince of Condé. Both of them favoured the Protestant religion more or less openly, and were therefore deeply distrusted by the Guises. Even in his depressed state, Antoine had married Jeanne d'Albret, heiress to the crown of French Navarre, a province at the foot of the Pyrenees, and not far from Toulouse. Whenever Bourbon used the right of entry at the Tuileries, which belonged to him as one of the King's nearest relations, the Guises took care that he should meet with affronts and vexations of every kind; so that over and over again he was on the point of withdrawing for ever from the intriguing and insolent court, where every one seemed bent on insulting him.

Of a very different character was the Prince de Condé. His

vigorous and enterprising spirit fretted at the power even more than at the insolence of the Guises. Accordingly he put himself at the head of a vast combination of the French Protestants, whose object was to carry off the boy-King from the custody of the Guises, and to punish these tyrannical ministers for their breach of faith towards the Protestants. An officer of the highest courage and spirit, named La Renaudie, was charged with the attempt on the King's person: as this was to take place while he was at Amboise, near Tours, the plot has generally been known in history as the "Conspiracy of Amboise." It was mismanaged, as plans generally are which involve the co-operation of many persons. One of its members revealed its details to the Guises; and, although La Renaudie might even then have succeeded in his object, he was checked at the critical moment by the overprudence of his associates. Accordingly a number of them were seized and sentenced to death; and the Prince of Condé himself was forced to be present at the execution—a punishment worse than death itself to a man of spirit. Even this might not have saved his life, but for the opportune death of Francis the Second, which was caused by his striking his head against the roof of a low passage along which he was hastening [A.D. 1560].

This event changed everything for the time in Paris. The widowed Mary Stuart was now invited to return to Scotland and assume the government there. There is a well-known story about her departure; she is said to have stayed on deck gazing on the shores of France, till it was too dark to see them any longer: even then she ordered her bed to be brought on deck, in order that she might look out once more at daybreak. But they had vanished from her sight for ever; and she will be known henceforth as the Queen of the rugged, obstinate, and sternly Protestant Scotland, where the Reformation was not, as in France, feebly struggling for existence, but had become a power with which royalty would have to reckon for its misdeeds, with no

chance whatever that it would be softened by beauty, grace, or the power of feminine blandishments.

CHAPTER XLIX.

SAINT BARTHOLOMEW.

From A.D. 1560 to A.D. 1574.

CHARLES THE NINTH was the second son of Henry the Second and Catherine de' Medici, and ascended the throne, under his mother's regency, on the death of his brother Francis in A.D. 1560.

We have now arrived at the period of the so-called Religious Wars in France ; that is of the long struggle of the Protestants for the toleration of their religion. One of the sad features of the time is that, while the common people on both sides were really contending for religion, the nobles were often insincere, or at least half-hearted, making the conflict a mask for political enmities, and often willing to change their religion if they saw that they could thus obtain any advantage. It is terrible to see that, in spite of their real indifference as to forms of belief, the Catholic rulers did not hesitate to persecute others in order to make them accept the religion about which they did not themselves care ; and the latter half of the sixteenth century is consequently marked in France, as well as in other countries, by a vast number of peculiarly atrocious acts. Calvin, as we have already related, had fixed himself close to the French frontier at Geneva ; here a number of printing presses were constantly at work for the

supply of Bibles, Testaments, and Psalm-books. The latter were arranged to the broad and simple melodies of Goudimel and other Protestant composers; and were then circulated by colporteurs through the length and breadth of France. It will scarcely be believed that any one detected as having one of those books in his possession was ruthlessly burned alive. Women who did the same were buried alive; and a case is on record where an unhappy mother suffered this most horrible of all punishments because she had not denounced her own son as being the possessor of a Protestant publication. For years together the work of blood went on: all through the dark and miserable reigns of Henry the Second, Francis the Second, and Charles the Ninth. Who was then to blame for it? Alas! it is hard to excuse any class of the community; whether it be the kings and princes who aided in such murders and, sometimes, even sat by to witness them; the common people, who gathered in crowds round the stake where a martyr was to die, and by their savage threats hindered the executioner from making the punishment more merciful; the parliaments under whose actual authority the work of death was done; or the Church which preached without ceasing that such acts were acceptable to God. What deserves peculiar attention, and is, indeed, almost beyond belief, is the unbounded endurance of the Protestants in the earlier times of the persecution. Until joined by nobles like the Prince of Condé, they never thought of resisting; but displayed in the midst of torments a firmness which sometimes struck even their destroyers with dismay. By degrees the persecution began to include not only individuals but whole communities; the Duke of Guise and his brother massacred sixty people at once in the small town of Vassy, near Troyes, and similar scenes were enacted in many other places. Then for the first time the Protestants rose in arms. A most interesting tale is told of the way in which the hesitation of the Admiral Coligny was overcome. This great

leader and statesman was well acquainted with war and all its horrors; and this knowledge made him unwilling to take the decisive step. But one night, as he was meditating in bed upon the troubles of the times, he heard his wife, Jeanne de Laval, weeping bitterly, and praying to God that some one might be raised up to lead the suffering Protestants. The Admiral bade her remember what was involved in her prayer; what desolation to the country; what bloodshed and ruin in families; how imminent also would be the risk of imprisonment and execution to any one who ventured to stand forth as a leader. "I beg therefore," said he, "madam, that you will consider for three weeks whether or no you wish me to run all these hazards; at the end of that time I shall ask for your reply." "No," said Jeanne, with fresh tears, "I am resolved already, and need no time for deliberation; moreover, how can you tell how many fresh murders these three weeks may produce? all which you might hinder if you will." At the sound of these noble words all hesitation vanished from the Admiral's mind. The next morning he mounted his horse, ordered his friends to gather round him, and began a war which too well fulfilled the desponding auguries with which he had entered upon it. What added to its horror was the system of foreign alliances first formed by the Roman Catholics, and at a later date by the Protestants. The former requested help against their own countrymen from the bloodthirsty Philip of Spain, the tyrant of the Netherlands, and also enlisted in their service a number of Swiss mercenaries, most brutal in character. The Protestants, on their side, in order to escape being thoroughly crushed, asked help from Queen Elizabeth of England, who sent them on a few troops and a small sum of money. This capricious and unprincipled woman, however, became almost immediately lukewarm in their cause, for two reasons; first, because she felt inclined for awhile to marry the Duke of Anjou, the brother of Charles the Ninth, and the chief

leader of the party opposed to them ; and, secondly, because the final triumph of Protestantism in France would be nearly certain to lead to a close union between France and the Netherlands, which would surround England, on the south and east, with a whole chain of hostile harbours.

Thus the Protestants had to fight almost entirely single-handed ; and for a long time they suffered defeat after defeat. At the battle of Dreux, in 1562, the Prince of Condé, refusing to wait for his English allies, was absolutely routed by the Swiss infantry, in spite of the noble efforts of Coligny, who commanded the cavalry. At the combat of Jarnac, in 1569, Condé was himself slain ; and at the much more serious struggle at Moncontour, in the same year, all that Coligny could accomplish was an orderly retreat before the forces of the Duke of Anjou. It is said that as he was being carried in a litter, with a severe wound in his face, but still directing every movement of his soldiers, an aged Protestant, also wounded, asked his bearers to take him near Coligny. He then stretched towards the litter, till he could see his chief, and with tears in his eyes, said—"Most true do we find it that God is very good to us." Shortly after the battle of Jarnac, a fanatical Protestant, named Poltrot, disgraced his cause by assassinating Francis of Guise, who left a young son, afterwards celebrated under the name of Henry of Guise. It was afterwards most falsely reported that Poltrot, in his last moments, had mentioned the Admiral as instigating his crime ; and this was afterwards made a chief pretext for one of the foulest acts ever done since the world began.

The circumstances which led to the massacre of St. Bartholomew's Day, 1572, are as follows. After the battles of Jarnac and Moncontour, Charles the Ninth became intensely jealous of the fame gained there by his younger brother, the Duke of Anjou. Besides this, the Duke was the favourite of his mother, Queen Catherine, and the King suspected that there was a conspiracy on

guards with musket-shots, they turned to fly ; and Charles, who saw their attempts to escape, could not, it is said, resist a mad impulse to fire at them with his own hand, as they rushed down towards their boats.

It is surprising to see how many eminent men perished at this fatal time. Such were Rameau, the most celebrated French philosopher of the time ; Goudimel, the "sweet singer" of Protestantism ; and Lambin, a splendid classical scholar, whose reputation has lately bloomed out afresh. Of the rank and file of Protestants, about 1,300 fell in Paris, and many more in the provinces. The higher nobles were generally spared ; Henry of Navarre saved himself by giving hope of his conversion to Catholicism ; but the slaughter among brave officers and other members of the middle class was terrible. We will not dwell any farther on these horrors : but historic truth makes it a duty to say that even the crimes themselves were less atrocious than the fiendish joy with which the news of them was received. The Cardinal of Lorraine gave the messenger a thousand pieces of gold ; King Philip's ordinary composure gave way to rapture at this crowning of all his hopes ; and the Pope allowed thanksgiving services to be held at the church of St. Louis, belonging to the French embassy at Rome, and also himself went in procession with the cardinals to St. Peter's, and ordered a medal to be struck in honour of the event. It may be questioned whether, at any time in the history of the world, religion was so utterly falsified and distorted as at this period. We are shocked to read of the human sacrifices of Mexico at the time when Cortez discovered it ; but all the lives destroyed at the "teocallis" in that country for centuries would not have equalled the number of Alva's victims in a single year ; and, besides, it shows a *far* less radical blindness to believe that a human being offered on an altar may be acceptable to an imaginary god of war, than to think of the true God, the God of the Bible, as wishing the torture and death of those who

take a different view of abstruse doctrine to that held by the Church. Yet obvious as this truth now appears, it was nearly unknown in the 15th century; the only persons who seemed to have any idea of it were the Chancellor l'Hôpital, who made some endeavours to impress his views on the royal family, and a few noble spirits, such as the Vicomte d'Orthez, the governor of Bayonne. This officer, being ordered to kill the Calvinists in his district, replied by the noble words, "Sire, I have communicated to the inhabitants, and to the troops in this city, your Majesty's orders: and I am commissioned to inform your Majesty that it contains many good citizens and brave soldiers, but not a single assassin."

The massacre took place in 1572; in 1574 the wretched Charles the Ninth died of a languishing complaint, constantly haunted, as he said himself, by visions of the women and little children who had been slain in it. He was succeeded by the brother whom he had so much dreaded; and the dukedom of Anjou was then conferred upon the Duke of Alençon, the new King's youngest brother, who, like himself, had been a suitor for the hand of Queen Elizabeth of England.

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CHAPTER L.

THE LEAGUE.

From A.D. 1574 to A.D. 1587.

THE new king, Henry the Third, had been in 1573 elected to the throne of Poland ; but willingly abandoned this when he found that he was to succeed to that of France. Probably no one less fit for the duties of royalty ever sat upon the throne of any country. In person he was small, and almost devoid of bodily strength ; his habits, moreover, were strangely effeminate, and he delighted beyond measure in dress and female ornaments ; at the same time his Italian blood gave him a delight in cruelty, and a decided inclination to treachery and stratagem. He had been, as we have seen, the chief contriver of the St. Bartholomew massacre ; yet so little was he under the influence of any genuine religious zeal for the Roman Catholic religion, that we find him engaged, during part of his reign, in a struggle against the Catholic nobles, and in alliance, for that purpose, with the Protestant Henry of Navarre, who had so narrowly escaped death at his hands in the massacre.

How this singular union came about we must now endeavour to see as clearly as possible. It was as follows. On the accession of Henry the Third, he was induced, and almost compelled, by his mother, Catherine de' Medici, to continue the Huguenot war which had been going on for the last two years. Little, however, was done to pursue it ; for, after a few combats, in which very slight advantages were gained on either side, Henry found it absolutely

impossible to pay his armies, and was obliged to disband them. Accordingly, in May, 1576, a peace was made which, among other articles, secured to the Protestants entire freedom of worship and local self-government, as well as the possession of many strong places in France by way of guarantee. Under this, Henry of Navarre ~~was~~ to have the government of Guienne, and the young Prince of Condé that of Picardy.

This treaty was the signal for openly forming the great Roman Catholic opposition, generally called "The League." It was directed, not against the Protestants only, but against Henry the Third, who was now considered as their supporter. Its chief was naturally Henry of Guise; with him was associated a large part of the nobility of France with their vassals. They demanded, in so many words, that only one religion should be allowed; and proclaimed that every Frenchman who did not join them was a traitor and a heretic. They announced their intention of breaking up France by restoring the old provincial customs, as they had existed in the time of Clovis; and, not content with this unpatriotic and destructive measure, they did not scruple to summon to their help Philip the Second of Spain, who was known all over Europe as the ruthless persecutor of the Reformation,—and even to offer the command of their forces to Don John of Austria, Philip's half-brother. It must be evident that these plans implied an overthrow of all the progress which France had made for centuries; all the old provincial tyrannies of the nobles would have been established, and the power of the crown, which we have seen gradually triumphing over that of the factious nobility, would have been absolutely annihilated. Moreover, though the Leaguers professed a desire to place on the throne the Cardinal Bourbon, Henry of Navarre's elder brother, yet it was well known that Philip, in spite of the Salic Law, claimed the throne of France for the Infanta, his daughter, as being descended from Henry the Second, and intended to use all means of annexing the country to those do-

minions which his tyranny was rapidly desolating. It is strange, when we remember the horror with which the Constable Bourbon's act in fighting against his country had been regarded a few years before, to see so many French nobles engaged in a traitorous enterprise, such as, if successful, would have made France a province of Spain.

Seeing the progress made by the League, and feeling himself no longer safe in Paris, Henry of Navarre managed to escape from the court, and was received with enthusiasm by the Protestants of the south. Yet his position was terribly dangerous, as an army under the Duc de Joyeuse, which the League forced Henry the Third to despatch, was advancing against him from the north; while he might also expect to be attacked in the rear by another force from Spain. Nothing in fact saved him except the folly of Joyeuse, who longed to gain a striking victory by himself, and thus to supplant Guise in the leadership of the League. Accordingly, he advanced at once upon Henry at Coutras, near Bordeaux, and with such precipitation that his artillery could not come into action, while the Protestant guns made terrible havoc in the close ranks of the Leaguers. The Catholic army was utterly routed, Joyeuse himself and many nobles being slain on the field, and Henry of Navarre's quarters were filled with banners captured from the enemy. It is said that, before the battle began, Henry had bitterly bewailed the stern necessity for civil war, and the lives which must be lost, whichever way victory might turn: also that at the same time he made an act of repentance for a bad action which he had done some time before.

The battle of Coutras occurred in 1587. The next year, 1588, was that of the Spanish Armada; and Philip's plans for the invasion of England then began materially to influence the history of France. For he knew well that in ordinary times England could count upon the French alliance in any attack from Spain; and was therefore quite resolved to stimulate as much as possible

the civil war in France, so as to make it impossible that any help should be sent from thence to Queen Elizabeth, or any attempt made by Henry to hinder the Prince of Parma's embarkation from Flanders. For this purpose he offered Guise 300,000 crowns and a large body of Spanish troops, and urged him at once to advance on Paris. To this Guise agreed; and sending on his troops in detached bodies, he ventured himself on entering the city, attended only by a few friends. Hence arose the fatal results to be related in the next chapter.

CHAPTER LI.

THE DAY OF BARRICADES.

From A.D. 1587 to A.D. 1589.

At this time Paris was strongly inclined to favour the party of the League. A gentleman belonging to this body was directing matters for its interests in each of the regions or quarters into which the city was divided, and these together formed an assembly called the Council of Sixteen. This Council was now openly planning the deposition of Henry, and it was intended to raise Henry of Guise himself to the crown; indeed it was currently said that the scissors were ready prepared which were to cut the king's hair, preparatory to his being imprisoned for life in a monastery, like one of the old Merovingian kings. The hatred against Henry the Third was also exceedingly increased by the fact that the supply of provisions to Paris had been so disordered

by the civil war, that the great city was on the very verge of starvation.

Accordingly, when Guise entered it, almost in disguise, he was received with a whirlwind of rapturous applause. The Parisians thought that their troubles were now at an end; thirty thousand people surrounded him in the streets, each striving to kiss his very boots; some brought chaplets of beads and tried to touch him with them, thinking that this would give them a kind of consecration. Thus he rode forward to the palace of the Queen-mother, at the spot where her astrologer's tower still stands to mark the site. When settled there he occupied himself in fomenting insurrections against the king, in which he pretended to have no concern. Henry the Third, on his part, sent for a large body of Swiss and French Guards. But the city rose like one man to oppose their entrance; the old chains were brought out and stretched across the entrances to the streets, and a host of barricades rose in every direction. The king, therefore, found it necessary to leave Paris; especially as his troops, even if assembled, would have been far less numerous than the Guisards. Indeed, it was time to withdraw, for the people, headed by a number of furious monks, were on the point of attacking the Louvre. So sudden was Henry's retreat, that many of the gentlemen who accompanied him were unable to get their riding dresses, and had to mount on horseback as they were. The moment the Spanish ambassador heard of their flight he sent an express to his master; and, the attempt to add violence to the civil war in France having thus signally succeeded, Philip found it safe to give the order for the departure of the Armada, which accordingly sailed on the 29th of May, 1588.

The King of France meantime had fled to Blois. There he remained, receiving from Paris constant embassies and solicitations to return, the intention of course being that he should put himself entirely into the hands of Guise. Henry protested his zeal for the

Catholic religion, declared his full intention of abolishing all heresy, but, at the same time, took especial care not to go back. Accordingly Guise followed him to Blois, and there established himself in the castle, so as to hold military command of the place. But, in spite of his long experience of the king's character, he still did not understand the man with whom he had to deal. Henry was plotting with some determined friends a plan of inconceivable treachery. Some of his officers, like the brave Crillon, were unwilling to disgrace themselves by an actual murder; yet even these were quite ready to guard the palace outside while it was being done. Others had no such scruples, and were willing to obey any direction given by the king. Accordingly, it was arranged that Guise should be summoned to Henry's presence; that, to reach it, he should cross two ante-chambers; that, as soon as he entered the second, the doors should be shut and locked behind him, and that the murderers should then do their bloody work. The foul and dastardly plot succeeded; in spite of many warnings Guise entered the slaughter-chamber, and was struck down by many daggers. He might perhaps have avoided the snare, if he had not been heart-wearied at the part which he had long been playing in the state, and at the associates with whom it had thrown him, and thus become careless of his own life. So fell the chief of the Catholic party, by the same assassin hands which at the St. Bartholomew massacre had slain Coligny, the chief of the Protestants. At the same time the Duke's brother, the Cardinal de Guise, was also ruthlessly murdered.

The King's next step was, of course, to look out for allies, in order to shield himself from the vengeance of the League and of their patron, Philip the Second of Spain, who was already being asked for aid by the Duke of Mayenne, Henry of Guise's younger brother. At the same time the Parisians declared Henry the Third to be deposed from the throne, and massacred every one on whom the slightest suspicion of heresy could fasten. The

King's only chance was therefore an appeal to Henry of Navarre ; and an alliance was soon made between them. The two kings had an interview near Tours, which Henry of Navarre opened by flinging himself into his kinsman's arms. Measures were soon arranged for the coming campaign, and they marched at once together to oppose the troops of the League. The new allies of the crown soon showed the metal of which they were made. By a terrible charge, the Huguenot regiments repulsed the Leaguers from Tours ; they then swept on like a torrent to Senlis and in a moment raised the siege of that town. The two kings then advanced to St. Cloud, and from the hill above it looked down on Paris. At the sight Henry the Third is said to have remarked, "The city seems to me to be swollen too large ; it would be the better for a little blood-letting."

It is sadly characteristic of the time that, once more, assassination was the mode of defence resorted to. A miserable monk named Jacques Clement was fixed upon and tutored for the purpose. He was brought into the presence of the Duchess of Montpensier, sister of the Guises, who promised him any reward he chose, if he would destroy the murderer of her brothers. This he undertook to do ; and, pretending that he had a letter of importance for the king, he managed to gain admittance to his quarters. The next morning he was summoned before Henry, and, delivering him a letter made up for the purpose, he seized the moment while he was reading it, drew a concealed knife, and with an unerring hand drove it into the lower part of the king's stomach. Thus died the last of the house of Valois, leaving the throne to the first of the Bourbons. With his last breath he exhorted his officers to render obedience to Henry the Fourth ; who, he said, would certainly embrace the Catholic religion—an augury which time unhappily fulfilled. Sad indeed had been the reigns of the House of Valois in France ; but they afford no spectacle so melancholy as that of the death of this bad man and

bad king, occurring as it did at the moment when a better and truer career seemed to be opening before him, and when he was, for the first time in his life, supported by men of true heart and strong arm, who might still have made his reign such a great and glorious one for France as to put out of sight the dark crimes of his earlier days.

CHAPTER LII.

HENRY IV.

From A.D. 1589 to A.D. 1594.

THE new king had many of the noble and striking qualities in which his miserable predecessor had been so conspicuously deficient. Without being personally handsome, he yet had a noble presence and a chivalrous bearing; and his bravery in war was well known. His mind was set on the welfare of France; in battle, as we have seen, he grieved that the blood of Frenchmen would have to flow so freely; and in peace he was endeared to the people by his homely, but celebrated wish, "that every peasant might have a fowl in the pot," and, as we shall see presently, by many other instances of kindheartedness. His jovial and vigorous character seems to have given rise to a variety of stories about him; as, for instance, that his mother the moment before his birth, sang a song in the patois of Auvergne; that, as soon as he saw the light, his lips were rubbed with a clove of garlic, and that next moment he imbibed with unmistakable

relish a few drops of generous wine. As his reign was on the whole to be a time of peace and revival to the energies of France, he gained a reputation even beyond his deserts. Every improvement which happier times brought forth was attributed to him, and in some cases not unworthily, as he listened with much atten-



BABYHOOD OF HENRY IV.

tion to the counsels of Sully and the other wise ministers who served him. Accordingly, it seems as if we may be allowed to put aside, with some few exceptions, all notice of the faults of this popular monarch, and think mainly of the good which he did to France.

Of course the Leaguers, who had made war so long with the

intention of excluding Henry the Fourth from the succession, were not likely to acknowledge him as king without a struggle. As soon as they recovered from the burst of delight into which they fell when the successful crime of Clement was made known to them, they set about measures of resistance. In the place of the graceful and accomplished Henry of Guise, his brother the Duke of Mayenne now stood forth as chief of the League. His talents, though perhaps really greater than those of Guise, were veiled under a heavy and unintelligent expression. Accordingly he never inspired his troops with the same confidence and affection which his brother had enjoyed. He was himself thoroughly alarmed at the frenzy of the mob of Paris, who armed themselves with spits and paraded the streets, swearing that no one should ever make them obey a Huguenot king ; and was only encouraged by the arrival of a number of German and Spanish troops sent to his aid by Philip of Spain, whose undying hatred of Protestantism had been stimulated to madness by the sad fate of the Invincible Armada in the previous year. The first step adopted by the Leaguers was to send an insolent summons to Henry the Fourth, calling upon him instantly to renounce Protestantism. On his refusal to do this at once, he was abandoned by a large number of the leaders who still remained with him, and by the troops which they commanded. He therefore retreated, with an army of only 7,500 men, in the direction of Normandy, where he hoped to meet the succours sent to him by Elizabeth of England. He was, however, overtaken by the French and Spanish troops of the League before the English arrived ; and his small force awaited the enemy at the Castle of Arques near Dieppe. His position was covered by a trench dug on purpose, and the field was searched by the guns of the castle. The first attack was made by Philip's Germans, who charged up to the trench, but then, reversing their weapons, declared that they wished to desert to the King. Accordingly they were allowed to

cross the trench, retaining their weapons ; but a short time after, thinking that Mayenne was getting the advantage, they used their weapons against the royal troops. One of **these** traitors presented his pike at the King's breast, summoning him to surrender. Such was Henry's perfect self-command in battle, that he gently put the weapon aside ; saying to his friends who were on the point of cutting the man down, " Don't do him any harm." Up to this time the Huguenot infantry, the conquerors at Tours and Senlis, had not been allowed to charge : now Henry said to the Pastor Damours, who rode at his side, " Sir, give out the Psalm." Then thousands of voices at once raised the first verses of the 68th Psalm, the oldest battle-hymn on earth, in the rude old French translation :—

" Que Dieu se lève seulement,
Et bientôt l'on va voir comment," &c.

While it was still sounding, Châtillon, the illustrious son of Coligny, charged the Leaguers in flank with his regiment of 500 arquebussiers. They fell back in dismay at such rough handling ; and at the same moment the mist rose and enabled the **gunners** of the castle to find their range with precision. Shot after shot crashed into their ranks ; and, when they retreated, they were pursued by the King's cavalry, who carried with them some pieces of light field artillery, then used for the first time, the discharge of which added terribly to the confusion. So completely was Mayenne routed, that he did not even venture to show himself in Paris, but retired to Amiens in order to meet the succours he expected from the Prince of Parma at Antwerp. Meanwhile, the fame of Henry's victory rang through the length and breadth of Europe ; achieved, as it had been, without any foreign aid, against the traitors who were selling France to Philip. For the English arrived too late for the battle ; yet in time to receive

Henry with splendid hospitality on board their vessels and to rejoice in his fortunate hour.



HENRY IV. AT IVRY.

The next task before Henry was to pursue Mayenne ; who had been by this time reinforced by 6,000 of Parma's Spanish troops,

receiving any instructions. This, however, the bishops would not allow ; and, in spite of many flippant replies which he made, they persisted in calling upon him for expressions of belief in the doctrines of the Catholic Church, taken one by one. His real feelings on the subject were probably expressed in the bitter saying attributed to him—"It is worth while hearing a mass to gain Paris." Once resolved, he seemed determined to shrink from nothing ; but actually took, as his predecessor had done before him, the coronation oath that he would exterminate all heretics, and received with apparent meekness his absolution for the crime of which he had been guilty in remaining so long alienated from the Church. In March, 1594, he had his reward, by entering Paris in great state, and seeing the few remaining Spanish troops withdrawn from the country.

What was the fate of the Huguenots when thus forsaken by their king? A sad one indeed. They obtained by the Edict of Nantes what was called liberty of conscience. That is, no one could thenceforth be questioned for his inward thoughts on religion. But liberty of worship was denied them ; only in a few towns might Huguenots meet to worship God purely. To get her child baptized, a mother in weak health might have to travel a hundred miles, perhaps finding her babe dead from the cold before the journey ended. Such was the liberty given to Protestantism by him who had once been the Protestant king.

CHAPTER LIII.

THE MINISTRY OF SULLY.

From A.D. 1594 to A.D. 1610.

WITH the conversion of Henry the Fourth most of the brightness of his life passed away. He was thenceforth in a false position. The Protestants still regarded him with an affection which he little deserved. He was once on a journey in the neighbourhood of La Rochelle. As soon as the inhabitants heard it, they sent messengers to him in all haste, entreating him not to come so near without visiting them. They were willing, they said, to receive him with all his army; any number of gates of the town should be put into his hands, and, if this was not sufficient, they would pull ~~down~~ some rods' length of the wall and make a breach through which he might pass more freely. The Vaudois near Saluzzo, appealed to him, as they afterwards did to Oliver Cromwell, for protection against the bigoted Duke of Savoy. Henry tried on this to conquer the country, but soon made peace and gave it up again without the slightest stipulation in favour of those who had invited him. Even the remaining Moors in Spain were induced by his reputation for humanity to apply to him for protection against the tyranny of Philip the Third; but, as might be expected, with little effect.

Out of the same false step grew another equally grave. After obtaining a divorce from Margaret of Valois, whom he had married, as you will remember, just before the fatal day of St. Bartholomew,

Henry at first promised to espouse a French lady of great beauty and accomplishments, but deserted her in order to form a great Catholic alliance. The new queen was Mary of Medicis, a name already ill-omened in French history. The king was punished by finding that his wife was far from handsome, that her temper was bad, and that she cared far more for the Italians of her suite than she did for her husband. By her he had a son, who succeeded him as Louis the Thirteenth; one of his daughters was also Henrietta Maria, so well known in English history as the evil genius of her husband, Charles the First.

Another terrible and incessant trouble which weighed upon Henry was the series of attempts to murder him, which made the time of peace more dangerous to him than war. In one case the Duc de Biron, who had shared with him all the glory of his earlier days, was convicted of the most shameless treachery. He had given intimation to the enemy, during the war at Saluzzo, of all the plans made by his master, and had even told them the exact hour at which Henry might be expected to be near their batteries, so that they might know when they would have the best chance of killing him. Again and again Henry urged the Duke to confess the crime of which he had been guilty, and to trust his mercy. This Biron steadfastly refused to do, and, following the example of Queen Elizabeth, who had lately beheaded the Earl of Essex under circumstances somewhat similar, the King was at last brought to order his execution.

Yet all the danger arising from plots of this kind was slight as compared with the constant fear of assassination on religious grounds. Whenever Henry showed any sign of relenting to the Protestants, the old Catholic enmity against him was sure to wake up once more. It is hardly possible to read, even now, without a mixture of grief and amazement, of the pertinacity with which this abominable project was pursued. Once he was actually wounded in the face; repeatedly he heard that assassins had been despatched

to Paris for the express purpose of killing him. As the end of his life drew near, he had a presentiment of what was approaching; and declared his belief that he should be killed on the 13th or 14th of April, 1610. Strange to say, on the latter of these two days he was attacked, while seated in his carriage between two gentlemen, by a man named Ravaillac, who had persuaded himself that any one likely to make war against the Pope must necessarily deserve to be slain by any one who had the power to do so. It appears that many attempts were made to warn Henry of this man's intentions: but he was surrounded by enemies who hindered the intelligence from reaching him. Even Ravaillac himself, who was more than half mad, had attempted to tell him his intentions, from a crazy belief that it would be magnanimous to kill him only after warning, and had been pushed away by the royal servants. The assassin now seized the moment when the King's footmen (who then used to walk before and behind their master's carriage) were making a short cut through a churchyard, so as to leave him unguarded. He then sprang on the step of the carriage, and twice planted a knife in the King's breast, the second blow being mortal.

Thus died Henry the Fourth, with all his faults the most universally beloved of French kings. With him passed away all the brightness of royalty in France; for the reigns which follow his sink into deeper and deeper gloom. Did he deserve this great affection? Hardly so if his life and actions are weighed in the strict balance of right and wrong; still, if we compare his disposition with that of other contemporary kings, we shall hardly think his people wrong in adoring him. As king he engaged, as we have seen, in comparatively few wars. Like his wise minister, Sully, he aimed at raising France through agriculture and commerce, both of which he fostered by all means in his power. Great roads were formed by his authority. A beginning was also made of the great system of inland canals from river to river in France. In order to ex-

gentle Valentina of Milan. This young man had many brilliant and attractive qualities, but his boundless ambition led him to commit many faults, and, moreover, he soon became entangled in a quarrel with the Duchess of Beaujeu, whose haughty and imperious disposition he could ill brook. After trying every means to persuade her to give up the care of the young king, he resolved to complain to the parliament of Paris that she had usurped the Regency, which ought to have belonged to the princes of the blood royal. This assembly, however, wisely replied by the mouth of its President, "that the Parliament was instituted to dispense justice to the people, but that it could not intermeddle in the quarrels of great princes." These words are the more remarkable as, when we proceed further, we shall see that a very contrary opinion was held by succeeding parliaments, who claimed a right to interfere with the government at all points. Disappointed in the answer, the Duke of Orleans felt that he must now resort to other means; he, therefore [A.D. 1484], managed by means of a coalition of barons opposed to the Regency, to compel the King's ministers to assemble the States-General; a course which had, as you will remember, been taken during King John's captivity and at other times of peril. The present assembly, however, failed in settling the contest for the Regency; although in other respects it displayed a truly patriotic spirit, and followed the examples of affection for the people set by Lecoq and Marcel, in the last generation. Louis accordingly took up arms in 1484 against the Regent, and, under pretence of delivering the King from captivity, risked a battle at St. Aubin du Cormier, and was completely defeated, in spite of the powerful aid of the Duke of Brittany. Nearly every one who was attached to the fortunes of the Duke of Orleans perished miserably on the scaffold, and he himself was thrown into prison, where he passed three years, reflecting on his folly, and knowing that he might lose his

head at any moment for having taken up arms against the King.

Instead, however, of the terrible punishment which the Duke of Orleans would certainly have suffered under Louis the Eleventh, one of the first acts of Charles the Eighth, on coming fully of age, ~~was~~ to throw open the doors of his cousin's prison, and to receive him with the greatest kindness and affection. The reconciliation proved sincere on both sides; and from that time the Duke of Orleans became the King's most faithful friend, and was treated by him with complete confidence.

The next act of Charles the Eighth was the union of Brittany to the French crown. Since the fall of Charles the Bold this was the only independent province remaining. By the death of the Duke of Brittany, it had descended to the Duchess Anne, a lady of rare beauty and talent. She had been destined to marry the Emperor of Germany, but Charles the Eighth stopped this match (which would have given foreigners a fresh footing in the country) by becoming himself suitor for Anne. The advantage to both countries was so obvious, that she did not hesitate to accept the proposal. The marriage soon took place, and the old strife between France and its western province was happily set at rest for ever. We are informed that Charles was far from handsome, that his figure was short and ill-proportioned, his body thin and awkward, and his head too large for his stature. Yet he was so good and gracious, and so polite and attentive to his wife's least desires, that in a very short time she loved him with all her heart.

Charles the Eighth had not forgotten his early delight in the prowess and valour of the French knights of old. Thirsting for adventures which he could not hope to meet with when the kingdom was at *péace*, he announced [A.D. 1494], a tournament at Lyons, with a series of brilliant fêtes, to which the chief nobles of the country were invited. When all were assembled, he used

the opportunity to propose an expedition to Naples, to which the French kings had constantly laid claim ever since the days of Charles of Anjou. This proposal was received with acclamation; and the reckless nobles of France, scarcely giving themselves time to lay aside their festive garments, entered with utter carelessness on a war, the consequences of which were to last for centuries. On the first entrance of the French armies into Italy everything seemed like enchantment. The beauty of the cities was beyond anything which they had ever conceived; and they gazed in wonder at the marble churches, the splendid palaces, and the processions formed to deliver to them the keys of the great towns. In less than nine months Charles found himself master of both Rome and Naples; and it seemed as if his enterprise had already been more than successful. His army, however, had been diminished by detachments from 30,000 to about 16,000 men; and he soon found that a league was being formed against him by Milan, Venice, and the Pope; and that, unless he retreated rapidly, he would be entirely cut off from France. Scarcely had he begun his retrograde movement, when the force which he had left behind in Naples was compelled to capitulate. He himself marched northward in all haste, and encountered the army of the so-called "Holy League" at Fornovo, near Parma, where the Apennines approach nearest to the Po, and soon form the defile called the Stradella. As the enemy had beset the way, it was necessary to fight; while the pass was so narrow that it was impossible to deploy for battle, or to find any stations suitable for artillery. Yet, with stern determination, the French pressed onward, the weak lances of the Italians splintering harmlessly against the armour of their knights. The Stradiot cavalry in the Venetian service were on the point of attacking the French infantry, and perhaps annihilating them, when they were diverted by the plunder of the French camp. The result was that the pass was forced with a loss of only 200 men,

the Italians having lost not less than 4,000. A noble act of self-devotion was performed in this battle. It became known that the enemy had directed some picked soldiers to single out and assault the King himself. Accordingly, nine brave knights dressed themselves in armour exactly like his, so as to draw all such attacks upon themselves, and so divert them from their master. After his victory, Charles the Eighth had no difficulty in recrossing the Mont Genève pass to Grenoble; and the Italian campaign was at an end, with no result, except barren glory, to compensate for the loss of so much blood and treasure. Two years afterwards Charles was on the point of renewing the attempt to conquer Italy, but died in the midst of his preparations, after a few hours' illness, at the same castle of Amboise where his childhood had been passed. It is said that two officers of his household died with grief at the loss of a master so kind and generous; thus proving, if the story is believed, a degree of devotion seldom shown at the obsequies of monarchs.

CHAPTER XLV.

LOUIS THE TWELFTH.

From A.D. 1498 to A.D. 1515.

AFTER having gone in succession through so many ages of ignorance and barbarism, we have now arrived at one of the most memorable epochs in the history of the world—memorable not only for the events by which it is marked, but by the wonderful changes which had been working for some time in the minds of the people of Europe. In the course of the fifteenth century many great discoveries had been made, and many new inventions introduced. Gunpowder, for instance, is said to have been then invented by a German monk : it was first used, as you will remember, at the battle of Crecy, and its employment evidently tended to make the heavy armour of the Middle Ages useless as a defence, and the thickest castle walls assailable. Still more important was the art of printing, which was, as we have seen, so much favoured by Louis the Eleventh. This queen of all inventions changed the whole face of literature and thought. Books up to that time had been multiplied only by the manuscript labour of monks and other copyists ; now they poured in thousands from the presses, and no one was any longer obliged to remain ignorant and uneducated. Henceforward an ever increasing number of persons learned to read and devoted themselves to study ; and it is very important for us to remark that, as men became instructed, they grew proportionably better

in morals, and more refined and gentle in their temper and mode of life. A third great discovery made in the time of Charles was that of the West Indies by Christopher Columbus. This great man made up his mind, partly from the records of ancient voyages, and partly from meditating on the figure of the earth and the proportion of land and water upon it, that it must be possible to reach the East Indies by sailing westward from Spain. After innumerable disappointments, he was at length entrusted by Ferdinand, King of Aragon, and Isabella, Queen of Castile, with three tiny vessels, hardly bigger than the yachts of our own day, in order to make the desired attempt. His crews were experienced and hardy mariners; but even they became so alarmed by the length of the voyage, that they forced Columbus to promise that he would turn homewards within a few days if no discovery was made. But just before the appointed time arrived an island of the West Indian group had come in view. We cannot sufficiently admire Columbus's boldness in penetrating such vast and unknown seas under the guidance of the lately discovered mariner's compass, without being daunted even when he found that the direction of the needle, which had been supposed to be always the same, was discovered to be subject to variations, according to its position on the earth's surface. He is generally and rightly spoken of as the discoverer of America. It should, however, be remembered that he never saw the great Western continent, which was named, not after him, but after a comparatively obscure navigator, named Amerigo Vespucci.

These inventions and the discoveries consequent upon them, in a very short time brought about a considerable change in many old customs. Gold and silver were dug out of the mines in the New World, and thus became far more common in Europe. Wealth was also largely increased by maritime trade, and with it the desire for knowledge; so that in Paris and many other cities of France schools and colleges were opened, where young men from

the provinces came in crowds to receive the instruction which they now began to appreciate.

In the year 1498 Charles the Eighth died childless, and was succeeded by his cousin, Louis of Orleans. At the beginning of the new reign some of the courtiers advised the King to revenge himself on those who had fought against him and made him prisoner at Saint Aubin du Cormier; but Louis released them with the noble words, "It is not for Louis the king to avenge the injuries of the Duke of Orleans!" This answer was deservedly praised, as it showed that Louis would not make use of his power to punish those who, in fighting against him as a rebellious subject, had only been fulfilling a stern duty.

Anne of Brittany, the widow of Charles the Eighth, now wished to retire to her own dominions, and thus to avoid seeing another sovereign reigning in her husband's place. But shortly afterwards Louis the Twelfth declared his marriage with Jeanne of France, the second daughter of Louis the Eleventh, to be null and void, and proposed to the Duchess of Brittany to share his throne, an offer which she accepted without hesitation. By this marriage the Duchy of Brittany was finally united to France, from which it had been separated by the last dismemberment of Charlemagne's Empire; and we may here remark that modern France, after this addition, extended to nearly the same limits as those of ancient Gaul.

[A.D. 1501.] Louis the Twelfth soon won the hearts of his subjects by his gracious manner, and was surnamed, "The Father of his People." Too soon, however, he conceived the fatal idea of a fresh invasion of Italy, like that of Charles the Eighth, in order to assert his claims on the territory of Milan (which had formerly belonged to the Visconti, the family of his grandmother *Valentina*), against the opposition of the King of Spain and of many Italian princes. Accordingly he placed himself at the head of a large and formidable army, leaving the care of his

kingdom to an able minister, the Cardinal d'Amboise, in whom he placed unlimited confidence.

Amongst the warriors who followed Louis was the celebrated Bayard, to whom was given the surname of "The Knight without Fear and without Reproach." This great warrior had from his earliest youth given proofs of the highest magnanimity; unlike his predecessor, Du Guesclin, he had always been obedient to discipline, and generous in all boyish sports; besides being passionately fond of all military exercises requiring strength and skill. He was now just grown up; and after obtaining his aged father's blessing, he followed the King to Italy, and there distinguished himself by the most admirable bravery and prudence.

One day when the French army was in retreat before a very superior Spanish force, Louis had ordered, with a view to preventing pursuit, that his army should destroy a wooden bridge the moment they had passed it. Unfortunately there was not time to execute this order; and the French would have been overtaken in their retreat had not Bayard placed himself nearly alone to guard the abandoned bridge, and thus by his single courage arrested the progress of the whole of the Spanish army. After fighting for many hours in order to give the French troops time for retreat, Bayard at length retired, after receiving many wounds, and left the Spaniards perfectly amazed with the sight of such extraordinary valour. When not on the field of battle, where the courage of a lion seemed natural to him, Bayard was the gentlest of the gentle. He hated all falsehood, and was a man of the most real piety and the most boundless charity. At the capture of Brescia in Italy, where he had been foremost in the assault, his soldiers brought him a young and remarkably beautiful girl, whom they had rescued from fearful danger. She was crying bitterly for her mother, of whose fate she was entirely ignorant. Bayard was touched at her distress, and spared no pains to discover the lost mother. In this he succeeded, and afterwards took up his

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struggling with all their might, and successfully, to avoid bearing their due share of taxation ; and it is easy to conceive how many poor men must needs have been reduced to the brink of starvation, in order to make good the sum wrongfully excused to one nobleman. Nor were the higher ranks content with avoiding just payments ; they were actually, as we have seen, in the habit of obtaining undeserved pensions from the Crown, even at the times when the poverty of the treasury and the distress of the people was greatest. A nation in which the superior classes thus act, instead of being, as we constantly see them at the present day, the leaders in all rightful and beneficent measures for the general good, is doomed to a fiery trial as surely as if the torch were already laid to the foundations of its churches and palaces.

At the period at which we have now arrived the everlasting struggle of nations showed no sign of slackening. France was still at war with Spain ; and at the moment of Louis's death a great event came to influence decisively, even up to the present day, the state of the two nations. This was the battle of Rocroy. The Spaniards had seized the moment of Louis the Thirteenth's greatest bodily weakness to invade the district of the Ardennes in the north-east of France. As the house of Condé had been closely allied both with Richelieu and with his successor Cardinal Mazarin, the young Duc d'Enghien, eldest son of the Prince de Condé, was appointed to defend Champagne against them. Utterly scorning the advice of Marshal l'Hôpital, who had been sent to control him, Enghien resolved on fighting as soon as he met the enemy. A terrible conflict ensued at Rocroy ; the renowned "tercios," or regiments of Spanish infantry, were first shattered by the French artillery, and then broken by repeated charges. From that moment the Spanish infantry lost its paramount reputation ; and this greatly hastened the decline of Spain, which, as we have seen, had begun in the days of Philip the

Second. Another effect of this battle was that it made the administration of Anne of Austria and Mazarin thoroughly popular; and thus this bad minister, who may be considered a kind of parody of Richelieu, ruled France for not less than



MAZARIN AND ANNE OF AUSTRIA.

eighteen years. His present popularity was immensely increased among the nobles, by the facile way in which he allowed them to plunder the treasury of the reserves which Richelieu had left behind him. Utterly devoid as he was of Richelieu's financial talents, Mazarin soon allowed the treasury to contract loans at enormous interest, and to raise money for present extravagance

by forestalling the income of future years. A striking instance of guilty waste may be seen in the fact that, amid the general distress, £125,000 were given for the support of the opera in Paris. Nor did Mazarin inherit any of the personal disinterestedness of Richelieu ; for at his death he left a fortune of £8,000,000, a sum hardly credible when there was no commerce to produce the properties of which we hear nowadays.

Of course such a government could not exist for a year unless new means of taxation could be found, by which money might still be wrung from the poor. Accordingly Mazarin discovered, in 1645, an obsolete statute prohibiting, under penalties, the building of fresh houses in Paris. In many years past this law had been forgotten, and the city had extended in every direction. The agents of the treasury were dispatched everywhere, threatening to have the houses pulled down if exorbitant fines were not at once paid. As the increase of building had been mainly in the suburbs, this created a frenzy of dismay among the poor, whom the measure was to turn out of house and home. An excellent magistrate, the President Barillon, ventured to plead for the unhappy householders, and was immediately arrested, and sent as a prisoner, with several others, to the Alpine fortress of Pinerolo, where he died in a few days.

Another of the minister's measures was an increase of the tax on provisions at the gates of Paris ; and this again threatened starvation to the poor. Yet Mazarin entered into a struggle of more than a year with the parliament of Paris, which refused to register the law for collecting the tax ; and he ultimately gained his point by carrying the young King in person down to the parliament. The parliaments in Paris were not, like the English parliament, elective bodies charged with the responsibility of making laws, but boards of magistrates holding lucrative posts, for which they had paid large sums, and of which it was sometimes in the King's power to deprive them. Many of the

members, however, were high-minded and patriotic men ; and, accordingly, not on this occasion only, but on many others, we find them standing up for the public good. Their power of resistance, however, was at end if the King chose to hold what was called a "Bed of Justice;" as he could then order the decree to be registered by his own sole authority. This was now done : the young King was carried down to the Parliament, and a decree was passed, the effect of which was to ruin all opposing magistrates. But the Cardinal had overshot his mark this time ; the general discontent burst out tempestuously ; barricades were raised in Paris ; several of the imprisoned magistrates were rescued by main force ; and the great financial companies of the city joined with the parliament in a league for the purpose of universal reform in the government.

Hence arose the civil war generally called the Fronde ; which may be described as a struggle between the industrious and the wasteful sections of the community. Mazarin had at first most unwillingly consented to the union of the companies ; and they soon made two demands, which, if granted in sincerity, might have averted important calamities from France. The first of them was that any one imprisoned by the government shall be tried, or at least examined, within twenty-four hours ; the second that there should be no taxation without consent of the parliament. Mazarin pretended to negotiate upon these points ; but he was really only waiting for the return of Condé's troops. As soon as he had these within reach, he ordered the arrest of the popular leaders. The seizure of the good and honourable Broussel was first made ; but this gave rise to a fearful tumult, in which several persons were shot dead.

The date of these events should be particularly noticed ; as they occurred in 1648 ; just when Charles the First of England was a prisoner, after having been ruined by a series of attempts in character, and even in details, strangely resembling those of

Mazarin. We shall therefore do well to notice how it was that the struggle in France did not, like that in England, lead to increased liberty ; but, on the contrary, ended by making the slavery and wretchedness of the country more complete. The reason must be sought in the different character of the English and French leaders.

In the very midst of the tumult arising from the seizure of Broussel, two prominent persons came forward to guide, and to ruin, the popular party. One of these was the Duc de Beaufort, a grandson of Henry the Fourth, and the darling of the populace from his good looks and ready tongue, but a man of no character or intelligence ; the other De Retz, the Coadjutor-Archbishop of Paris, one of the most recklessly wicked men of his time. Under the guidance of these leaders, the outbreak in Paris began more fiercely than ever. Broussel was liberated from prison, twelve hundred barricades were formed in the streets, and with great difficulty Anne of Austria escaped from Paris, carrying the boy-King with her.

Condé was now returned, and though really inclined to the popular side, he felt that, as a prince of the blood, he must take the Queen's part. Accordingly he began a siege of Paris, which lasted through the months of January, February, and March, 1649. At last the distress became so great that the city was obliged to surrender. Thus the struggle for liberty was decided against France ; its failure arising mainly from the divisions introduced into the popular party by De Retz, who could not forget that the interest of the clergy, of whom he was the head, was really opposed to that of the people. But for these differences, Paris might have held out a little longer ; then all the provincial parliaments would have joined the cause, and the demand for freedom would have been too strong to resist. As it was, the country sank deeper and deeper downwards ; the contrast between a brilliant and extravagant court, and a starved and despairing people became

constantly more prominent ; and France, with a few short intervals of improvement, drifted helplessly on towards the Revolution.

The King and Queen-mother did not venture to return to Paris for two years. At the end of that time Mazarin—who had gone into exile—resumed his former power ; indeed, was generally supposed to be married to Anne of Austria. Meanwhile the condition of France was fearful ; everywhere people were seen absolutely starved, or picking up scattered grains of oats for food. Hundreds of orphan children were to be seen wandering about the country unfed and uncared for ; till, at last, an excellent priest, named Vincent de Paul, set on foot a society for their relief. Though French charity was not at this time very liberal, and only £4,000 in all was subscribed for the maintenance of these poor little creatures, yet by indomitable perseverance and exertion, this good man succeeded in saving many of them.

It should be remarked before we close the period of the Fronde, that very many of the nobles had gone against the court in the course of it ; their natural jealousy of Mazarin having reappeared when he had exhausted the means of gratifying them by gifts of money. They also returned to the old practice of asking for aid from Spain against their own government ; and we find the greatest generals of the time, Turenne and Condé, in command alternately of Spanish and French armies. At length the greatest miseries of Europe were ended by two great treaties. The Peace of Westphalia in 1648 ended the Thirty Years' War, and guaranteed France in safe possession of her frontier towards both Spain and Germany ; that of the Pyrenees in like manner concluded the war with Spain. According to its terms, Louis the Fourteenth married the Infanta Maria Theresa of Spain, renouncing, however, all claim to succeed in her right to the crown of that country.

The crown had now triumphed in France ; over the nobles

through Richelieu, over the parliament and the people through Mazarin. The fatal results of this victory will be seen in the following chapters.

CHAPTER LVI.

THE AGE OF LOUIS THE FOURTEENTH.

From A.D. 1661 to A.D. 1678.

IN the year 1661 Louis the Fourteenth attained his majority, and began to reign by himself. Never was there a king less educated for his royal office : for Mazarin had not only left him destitute of the commonest refinements of life and allowed him to associate with menial servants, but had actually put an end to the attempts made by some men of kind heart to teach him at any rate the history of France. He is said, however, to have been brilliantly handsome, and many facts of his life show the great dignity of his manners. There is just a shade of doubt whether he was the real heir to the crown ; for a mysterious person, whom some suppose to have been an elder brother of the King, was imprisoned during his reign, wearing on his face an " iron mask," which was never allowed to be removed. Among other places of confinement this person was placed in the island of Ste. Marguerite, opposite Cannes. As his windows looked on the sea he scratched some words on a silver dish and threw it into the water. It afterwards happened to be entangled in the net of a fisherman, who took it at once to the Governor. This officer told the man that it was well for him that he had never learned

to read. His meaning was, that if the poor man had, even accidentally, learned the state secret so carefully kept, he must needs have been punished either by death or by perpetual imprisonment.

When Mazarin was dying he told the King that, on leaving him Colbert as a minister, he more than balanced any wrong which he might have done him in earlier times. In this assertion there was some truth : for seldom has any country had a more active or zealous minister of finance ; and if he had lived a hundred years later, when Adam Smith and others had discovered the science of political economy, he would probably have been the greatest benefactor ever known to France. As it was, his efforts had only a partial effect. He began by greatly improving the roads of France, thus giving a great stimulus to trade. Next he dug the Canal des Deux Mers from Montpellier to the Garonne, by which small vessels were able to avoid the navigation all round Spain. He formed a gigantic Chamber of Commerce, with representatives from all the trading districts. He redeemed the French colonies from the proprietors to whom they had originally been conceded, and opened their trade to all Frenchmen. He then proceeded to lay high taxes on the cloths of Holland and England ; thus creating a great but unnatural manufacture of them in France itself, and not being in the least aware that it would have answered far better to stimulate the production of silk, wine, and fruits, for which France has peculiar advantages, and then exchange them for the manufactures of other countries. Nothing could exceed the energy with which he carried on the work of creating a navy, which was absolutely necessary for the protection of the maritime trade of France against the pirates who then swarmed on every sea. With this object it is said that he vehemently encouraged the various criminal judges of France to sentence men to the galleys ; a way of manning his fleet not less cruel than high-handed. All the mariners in the country were declared by an edict to be at the King's command, and

liable at any moment to be called from the profitable merchant service to the small and irregular payments of the navy. In these and many other ways, often violent and ill-considered in the extreme, Colbert tried to further the commercial prosperity of the nation.



LOUIS XIV.

But he had the misfortune to serve a master to whose merest whim every consideration of prudence had to bend; and thus even his best considered schemes were doomed to failure as surely as his mistakes. Louis the Fourteenth compelled him to

find money for building the preposterously extravagant palace of Versailles, about fifteen miles from Paris. The site was a marsh, which had to be made solid at enormous expense; and, when this was done, buildings were erected of the most heavy and tasteless character, which, it is said, cost a sum equivalent to £40,000,000 at the present day. Besides this, the process of pensioning poverty-stricken nobles went on as vigorously as in the early days of Louis the Thirteenth. Yet all these years of extravagance were trifles compared with the wars of this vain-glorious reign.

Louis had set his heart on conquering Holland, and making spoil of the wealth which ages of industry had accumulated in its thousands of neat and quiet homes. For this purpose he made, in 1670, a secret treaty with Charles the Second of England, to the effect that Charles should receive a large annual pension from France, and that then, with the money obtained from his parliament for the purpose of checking the career of Louis, he should join him in subduing Holland, receiving for his own portion the province of Zealand; that is, the system of islands formed in the estuary of the Rhine.

The war thus deceitfully planned began in 1672; and it found Holland by no means prepared for an united resistance. The true Dutch, those whose fathers had won their liberty from Philip the Second, wished to remain republican, and to be ruled only by elected magistrates. This party was headed by the two brothers, Cornelius and John de Witt, men of the most simple-minded honour and courage. But they were more than counterbalanced by the Orange party, who wished the hereditary Stadtholderate to belong to the young William, as descended from William the Silent, the great father of their state. The De Witts were first to organize the resistance to France; but a popular panic set in, and they were arrested and afterwards murdered by a furious mob, which burst the gates of their prison.

Before William of Orange could thoroughly take their place, the whole country was invaded by the French. These, however, neglected Condé's advice, which was to take possession of the vast system of sluices at Muyden; and accordingly the Dutch, with the most admirably patriotic determination, laid great part of their country under water, rather than submit to the French. For two whole years Holland lay thus submerged; and this gave time for the Germans and other powers opposed to Louis to bring help to those whom he was attacking. The result was that, after committing frightful devastations, the French were obliged to leave the country. Moreover, the fact that Louis had insisted on the Catholic clergy being received by the Dutch so completely alarmed the English, that the strongest and most decisive measures were at once taken to prevent anything of the kind happening in England. The safeguard chosen was the Test Act, by which, for 150 years, it became impossible for any Roman Catholic to hold any high office under the English Government.

As a consequence of this war, Colbert was called upon to provide £2,500,000 additional income annually, and this demand was enough to crush the rising hopes of French industry. The result was that English travellers, especially the philosopher Locke, who travelled in France in 1678, were shocked at the way in which lands were going out of cultivation, and at the terrible taxation which took from manufacturers and those employed by them a full half of their earnings. "An idea of the oppression may be formed," says Locke, "from the case of a bookseller at Niort, who is too poor ever to eat meat himself, but who has two soldiers quartered on him, for whom he has to provide three meat meals every day. Such is the way in which industry is oppressed in this unhappy country." We shall see in the next chapter that things got still worse as the reign of Louis the Fourteenth proceeded.

CHAPTER LVII.

THE LATTER DAYS OF LOUIS THE FOURTEENTH.

From A.D. 1685 to A.D. 1715.

THE event which best marks the beginning of Louis the Fourteenth's decline is the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes. You will remember that this law had given the Protestants of France some small amount of liberty, though it allowed of their worship only under many restrictions. Of late years they had become extremely important to France, as many of them were merchants or manufacturers; and accordingly they had been energetically protected by Colbert. When this great minister died, broken-hearted at the failure of his schemes, he was succeeded by Louvois, whose inclinations were just the reverse. Moreover, the King had married, in 1685, Madame de Maintenon, who had been the governess of some of his children: and this lady's influence took the same unhappy direction. Louis's own health also began to fail at this time, and he was afflicted with several painful complaints. Accordingly his thoughts began to turn constantly in the direction of religion as he understood it; and his idea evidently was, that persecution of Protestants was the surest way to recommend himself to God. His first step was vastly to extend the horrible practice of robbing people of their children, that these might not remain Protestants. One edict fixed the age of seven as that at which children might be encouraged to change their religion; the still lower age of five was afterwards fixed for

this. Girls were torn from their mothers, and collected, as "New Catholics," into houses and convents selected for the purpose. Some of the poor children struggled against the bondage ; others, of course, from their tender age, soon learned to forget their parents and their father's house. This was the case with the young ladies of St. Cyr, who were encouraged by Madame de Maintenon to act in the King's presence the exquisite dramas of Racine, some of which were composed on purpose for them. Meanwhile the most frightful measures of cruelty were pursued against their parents. Protestant ministers, sometimes fifty at a time, were sent to the galleys—a punishment much worse than death. Laymen had soldiers, sometimes to the number of a hundred, quartered in their houses ; and these were not only allowed, but encouraged, to do all the damage possible. Thus these grave quiet homes became dens of riot ; and the serious Protestant ladies were forced to attend upon their guests, as they were not allowed to have Catholic servants, and many of the poorer members of their own community had apostatized. It is impossible, in a work like this, to relate a thousandth part of the sufferings of these unhappy people. Sometimes their gentle behaviour wrung even the hearts of their persecutors ; and it is said that at this time there might be seen amid the filth and vermin of the galleys some of the brightest examples of Christian virtue which the world had to show.

At last the doom of the Protestants was decided. With despair in their hearts, leaving behind them their beloved ones in the tyrant's power, they resolved on becoming exiles for ever from their home. In spite of savage laws which doomed them to the galleys if they tried to fly, they managed to escape in all directions. Lands, houses, property of all sorts, were left behind. Some fled by rugged mountain pathways into Germany or Switzerland ; others hid themselves in the holds of vessels, and so made their way to England or elsewhere. Geneva opened her arms to the

fugitives ; every house was proud to receive as many of them as it would hold. Holland was still more generous ; Jews, Lutherans, and even Catholics, being unsparing in their charitable donations. There many noble houses of refuge were founded, and, with great delicacy, placed under the management of French ladies. In all the churches of England collections were made for the fugitives, and, except by James himself, they were received there with the utmost kindness. Well did they reward their noble entertainers ; for families thus originating became everywhere naturalized, and did honour to their adopted country. Such in England is the nobly patriotic family of Romilly ; such too was the gallant Schomberg, and Ruvigny, the leader of the French regiments in William's service at the battle of the Boyne.

Meanwhile the loss of such an industrious and orderly section of the people greatly aggravated the ever-increasing distresses of France. To put the crowning stroke to these, Louis began, after the deposition of James the Second in 1688, a series of preposterous wars, intended to replace him on the throne which he had so justly forfeited. At first the French had some success in these, defeating William the Third in not a few battles and sieges. But the case became very different when, in 1701, William's death threw the command of the English armies into the hands of Marlborough. Then victory after victory was gained by the English ; at Blenheim, in Bavaria, a large French army under Marshal Tallard was almost entirely destroyed ; at Ramilies and at Malplaquet, in Belgium, the French were again defeated with fearful completeness. Thus Louis the Fourteenth, whose early days knew only the experience of victory, ended his life amid darkness and discomfiture ; and his own country felt some of the horrors of war which he had inflicted on so many others.

Almost simultaneous with these last events was the war of the Succession in Spain. The policy of successive kings had brought this great country to a state of exhaustion almost

unparalleled in the history of nations. Commerce and manufactures were dead; the art of mining had been lost; vast



DEATH OF LOUIS XIV.

quantities of land were falling out of cultivation; and the people were actually starving in the streets of Madrid. As France, in

spite of her many miseries, was not yet sunk so low as this, Charles the Second, King of Spain, the brother of Louis's first wife, Maria Theresa, appears to have hoped that, by bringing his country into closer connection with France, he might do something to recover it. Accordingly he left the succession by will to Philip, Duke of Anjou, the grandson of Louis. The legacy was accepted; and though Philip's succession was opposed by the house of Austria in alliance with England, yet the French party were ultimately successful. Thus the Bourbons became masters of Spain as well as of France; and a long period began, during which Europe was largely affected by the close connection between these two countries.

Exquisite courtesy in personal behaviour is commonly ascribed to Louis the Fourteenth, and undoubtedly some of his actions are of a character to justify this praise. Such was his reception of James the Second and his Queen when they escaped to France. Louis immediately assigned them, as a residence, the palace of St. Germain, with an income sufficient for all their needs; and besides this, he took unwearying pains to make them feel as if they had lost nothing in dignity or comfort by their exile. When James was on his death-bed, Louis actually was so far carried away by a mistaken spirit of chivalry as to acknowledge his son, generally called the Chevalier de St. George, as King of England; thereby bringing on his own country another series of terrible wars. In other cases, however, when his passions or interests were involved, he could be much the reverse of courteous. In the early part of his reign he forced the aged King of Spain, who was his own father-in-law, to make an abject personal apology for an affront which he considered himself to have received; and when the Pope tried to maintain order among the members of the French embassy at Rome, Louis forced him by violence to withdraw his command and to erect a pyramid in perpetual memory of the transaction.

The age of Louis the Fourteenth is celebrated as being that in which French literature began the triumphant career which it is still pursuing. Then Corneille and Racine wrote their dramas, Molière his comedies, and La Fontaine his celebrated Fables. Besides these, a vast number of writers distinguished themselves in philosophy, mathematics, history, and general learning. Tournefort published his travels at the Cape, Sir John Chardin those which he had made in Western Asia. Poussin, with several other Frenchmen, was famous in painting, and Lully in music. We shall soon see to what great events this burst of thought gave rise in the next reigns.

CHAPTER LVIII.

LOUIS THE FIFTEENTH.

From A.D. 1715 to A.D. 1774.

THE reign of Louis the Fourteenth lasted fifty-two years, and he outlived many of his immediate descendants. First, he lost his eldest son, the Dauphin; this event was soon followed by the death of his eldest grandson, the Duke of Burgundy, who would naturally have succeeded his grandfather. Louis the Fifteenth was the second son of the Duke of Burgundy, and, therefore, great-grandson to Louis the Fourteenth.

The Duke of Burgundy, had he lived, would have been a king like St. Louis. As a child he had been violent and reckless; but in his seventh year he was fortunate enough to come under

the influence of the excellent Fénélon, Archbishop of Cambrai, whose mildness completely corrected him of these faults. He then became most diligent in all his duties, and incomparably modest and charitable. His second instructor, the Marquis de Beauvilliers, used to educate him for his high office by making him thoroughly understand the reports sent to him as minister on the condition of the various provinces of France ; so that his training was the very opposite to that which Mazarin had given his great grandfather. A graceful anecdote of this prince may give an idea of the beauty of his character. He had been told of a case of distress which it was beyond his pecuniary means to relieve. So, taking from his breast a diamond cross given him by the King, he ordered one of his servants to sell it, and to relieve the sufferers with the money. "Go," was his expression, "and let these stones be made bread."

In 1712 he died, and his eldest son with him. Louis the Fifteenth succeeded to the throne at the age of five years ; so that again France was to be under a regency. The person appointed to this office was the Duke of Orleans, a nephew of Louis the Fourteenth.

During the regency all Paris—indeed, all France, from one end to the other—was convulsed by the proceedings of the celebrated Law. This singular person persuaded the world, and apparently himself also, that enormous profits might be made by a system of trade with America, of which the depôt was to be the city of New Orleans, near the mouth of the Mississippi. For this notable purpose he was allowed to form a company ; and its shares soon rose to the most preposterous prices. It mattered little that there was no European population along the great American river, and that the Indian tribes were, of all nations in the world, those from whom a trade of any value could least be expected. Every one bought the shares with the simple object of holding them till the price rose, and then disposing of them at a large

profit. It gave them little concern that some one must be ruined at last, as soon as the real worthlessness of the property had impressed itself on the mind of the community. Their calculations were for some time justified by the event, as the stock went on rising more and more prodigiously. At last the collapse came : thousands found that they had lost their whole property by their frantic speculation. The Regent himself, and some others who had timely information, sold their shares at a profit, and thus helped to give the signal for the wide-spread ruin which followed.

It is pleasant to turn from this scene of dishonesty to the work of Frenchmen in another part of North America. Along the river St. Lawrence, and the chain of lakes from which it flows, is situated the noble country of Canada, then a French colony. As early as 1629 it had been made over, after the fashion of those times, to a body of associates, of whom the chief was Richelieu himself. M. Champlain, a member of the company, was appointed governor of the so-called New France ; and his first act was to invite some Jesuit fathers to do their best for the spread of Christianity in the new territory. Some devoted priests, of whom the chief were Brébent and Lallemand, left Quebec with a party of Hurons, who were going to the country round the Ottawa river. On the shores of Lake Huron they erected a small church, and drew the Indians round them by a thousand acts of kindness. "I have often thought, in past years," said an Indian warrior, "that my life was under the guardianship of some good spirit unknown to me ; now I find that the Christ whom you preach was my unseen protector." Soon Madame Peltier, a young and wealthy French widow, landed at Quebec, with some other ladies, for the purpose of doing the Indians all the good in their power. Montreal was founded in 1640, in order to bring the French nearer the chief native tribes. From this point the missionaries made their way to the Falls of St. Mary, on Lake

Superior ; and even succeeded in forming a league with the nations which had long been most hostile. "We have thrown the war-hatchet," said the Mohawks, "so high in the air, so far beyond the sky, that no arm on earth can ever reach it." In the succeeding years, after enduring several attacks from the fickle Indians, the noble Frenchmen pushed on by way of the lakes towards the unknown head-waters of the Mississippi, which Marquette at length had the honour of discovering. In 1684, a fleet left Rochelle for the purpose of founding New Orleans. Accordingly, the French empire in America consisted of Canada in the extreme north, and Louisiana in the south, the two great settlements being further linked together by a chain of posts along the mighty river ; and it is deeply interesting to remark the beneficent and truly religious feeling which led to the acquisition of so much of this vast dominion.

A feeling of sadness comes over us when we mentally return to the miserable reign of Louis the Fifteenth, and its effects on France itself. The exhausted country was still forced to bear the burden of several terrible wars, in particular of those with England and Prussia. At Fontenoy the English suffered a severe defeat in 1745, but were not disabled from continuing the war. In the Prussian war, on the other hand, the French were more easily and completely overthrown than on any other occasion in their history. They had entered into a strange alliance with Austria against Frederic the Second of Prussia, without having the least real interest in the triumph of their allies or the defeat of their enemies. Accordingly, in the course of a single month, Frederic, who was one of the greatest generals in Europe, struck two decisive blows against his enemies. By the one he defeated the Austrians at Leuthen ; by the other, the French at Rossbach. He had also succeeded in making head against the Russians, though with terrible losses in the field. At last his various enemies were obliged, in 1763, to make peace,

leaving him in possession of the territories which he had seized from them.

A terrible result of the cruel spirit of persecution which we have seen at work in France since the beginning of the religious wars was that the two ideas of humanity and religion were now



A VILLAGE SCHOOL.

commonly thought to be opposed to one another. Accordingly there arose a set of thinkers of surprising ability, of whom Voltaire was the chief, who deliberately put aside Christianity in order to devote themselves to the task of forcing the tyrants of

Europe to be more humane. They investigated to the bottom, in spite of innumerable obstacles, a number of acts of surpassing cruelty done by authority in France; and, although driven into exile, they were able, by the eloquent narratives which they published at Geneva and elsewhere, to stir up the strongest feeling of reprobation. Other eminent Frenchmen, like the learned President Montesquieu, threw the weight of their influence into the same scale, without thinking it necessary to cast religion aside. Hence it happened that a spirit of kindness and humanity went abroad from France even during these sad times; perhaps the more so because of their sadness. It began to be felt everywhere, at least by a certain number of generous minds, that it is shameful in the upper classes to plunder and oppress the poor; that wars ought not to be made on account of princes' whims; that the rich should pay taxes as well as the poor, or even more; and that the noblest work of governors is to make the people happy. At this time, in the works of Montesquieu, we find a protest against negro slavery, as well as many noble passages denouncing misgovernment of all kinds. But perhaps nothing can show better the change of feeling with regard to the lower classes than some anecdotes told of the Dauphin, Louis's eldest son. He once took an opportunity of showing his sons the parish register of baptisms, where their names were inscribed among those of the other parishioners. "See," said he, "how completely on a level all men are placed by nature and religion. Virtue alone makes any difference between man and man; greatness in the eyes of the world is nothing, and greatness before God everything." The same excellent prince was passionately attached to hunting; but, having once, by accident, seriously wounded one of his attendants, he was utterly inconsolable, and could not be persuaded for the rest of his life ever again to engage in the same amusement. But once more, and not for the last time, France lost the prince on whom her best hopes were

fastened. He died in 1765, and his son, the Duke de Berri, became Dauphin in his place.

CHAPTER LIX.

LOUIS THE SIXTEENTH AND THE REPUBLIC.

From A.D. 1774 to A.D. 1800.

WE are now approaching near our own times, as there are persons still living who can just remember at least the latter days of the old French monarchy, before its sun set in the darkness and misery of the Revolution.

On hearing of the death of Louis the Fifteenth, the Dauphin and Dauphiness fell on their knees, exclaiming with tears, "God protect us, for we are too young to reign!" The new Queen was Marie Antoinette, daughter of Maria Theresa, Empress of Germany, and sister to the Emperor Joseph. It is impossible to imagine a royal pair apparently more suited to win the hearts of a nation than Louis the Sixteenth and his wife. Her beauty and grace made her the universal idol; and the King had a simplicity of manners and a kindness of heart which showed him also in the most advantageous light. His education had not been good; but, even as king, he strove by all means to improve himself.

When he came to the throne, the American colonies of England had thrown off her rule, and were in the midst of their struggle for independence. In this they had been considerably aided by France. First a number of distinguished volunteers, among

whom the Marquis de Lafayette was the chief, had offered their services to the young republic. After a while France itself engaged as a nation in the same cause ; and hence sprang, what the King and his counsellors little expected, an enthusiasm for republican institutions. In the gay drawing-rooms of Paris no one attracted so much attention as the American envoy, Benjamin Franklin, in whose grey locks and plain Quaker costume people thought that they saw a visible picture of patriarchal simplicity. This alliance, accordingly, stimulated most powerfully the desire to overthrow what remained of the old feudal institutions of France.

Another cause which acted in the same direction was the extreme disorder of the French finances. Not a year passed without the public expenses being much greater than the revenue ; and any attempt to borrow of course made matters worse, by the additional charges in the way of interest which it involved. An excellent minister, named Turgot, endeavoured to induce the privileged classes, the nobles and clergy, to give up their immunity from some of the most important parts of the taxation ; but he failed in this, and was obliged to resign. After him came M. de Calonne, who was possessed by the unhappy belief that extravagance benefits the poor by the amount of employment which it finds for them. Accordingly he encouraged the Queen in a course of reckless expenditure, by which, in some cases, her honour was heavily compromised. After many vain attempts to remedy the disorder which was everywhere increasing, it was at length (in 1789) found necessary to summon the States-General, which had been suspended since the year 1560.

Now at length all the new ideas which had been so long repressed in France found their way to the light. The deputies of the third estate—that is, those who represented the people—at once refused to be, like the English House of Commons, a body whose vote might be reversed by the peers. Accordingly, within little more than a month of the elections, the King made an unadvised

attempt to shut them out of their place of meeting. But this endeavour of his had been foreseen and provided for ; and, in



REVOLUTIONISTS.

accordance with directions received from their constituents, the

Chamber adjourned to a fives-court near, and passed resolutions of the most vehement kind, affirming their right to sit with the nobles and clergy in a single assembly, where their numbers would, of course, make their vote paramount. To this the King was soon obliged to assent, as it appeared that his troops could not be trusted to act against the people.

Unluckily for the welfare of France, these events had shown the people how irresistible their power was at the moment. They therefore obtained arms and formed themselves into a National Guard. They then attacked the Bastille, a royal prison, in which for many years past persons obnoxious to the government had been confined for indefinite periods on a mere order from the minister. The prison was stormed and destroyed ; and it was not long before the mob invaded first Versailles and then the Tuileries, no one daring to stop them. Meanwhile, the National Assembly had passed a variety of acts. They had abolished the exemptions from taxes, opened the higher ranks of the army to all Frenchmen, made a clean sweep of the game laws, and proclaimed the equality, in all points, of Frenchmen in the eye of the state.

After enduring many affronts, the King and Queen resolved to fly to the frontier, where some loyal troops yet remained, and where they would have found German allies to reconquer France for them. The royal pair escaped with ease from the Tuileries, but were stopped in their flight at St. Ménéhould, near Montmédy. and brought back as prisoners to the capital, with every circumstance of indignity. As soon as the news of this event reached Germany, a large force was despatched to France, and the Duke of Brunswick, its commander, announced, on entering the country, that every town or village which hindered, or did not aid, the King's flight in the event of his repeating the attempt, should be so destroyed that people would not know where it had stood.

But Brunswick had little idea of the revolutionary energy which had been kindled in France. The call to arms rang from one end of the country to the other: the patriotic song called the "Marseillaise" was composed, and spread like wildfire. Dumouriez, with a ragged and ill-fed but determined army, defended at Valmy the passes of the Argonne, in Champagne, until the wet autumn roads made it impossible for Brunswick to advance farther that year; and accordingly the invasion came to an end. But it produced some of the saddest events which history has to record. Filled with a mixture of rage and panic terror at Brunswick's manifesto, the National Assembly dared to bring the King to trial for treason against the state; and he was actually guillotined close to his own palace. The mob of Paris then formed a kind of court to try those of the nobles who were in confinement, having been unable to escape to foreign countries. Men and women were condemned, almost without exception, and then hurled forth upon the pikes of a howling multitude. And finally, the Queen, with her holy-minded sister-in-law, Madame Elizabeth, was put to death by the savages who had them under their control; the unhappy little dauphin being left in prison to pine to death in filth and neglect.

After this came a period of prolonged disorder, party struggling against party, and the more violent constantly getting the victory. Both Austria and Prussia now had bitter reason to regret their having declared against the Revolution, as they found themselves involved in a series of fierce wars. Much more was this the case when, out of the very bosom of the Revolution, there arose a military leader whose genius for war was absolutely unparalleled in history. This was Napoleon Bonaparte, who was appointed, in 1796, to command the armies of the Republic in Italy. Here he defeated the slow-moving Austrians in a series of extraordinary engagements. The most striking of these was the battle of Arcola, in which he was retreating, apparently in utter discomfi-

ture, before the army of Alvinzi. Hardly, however, had he left the city of Verona by its western gate, than his men were ordered to turn back and recross the Adige. Then by cross-roads through the marshes they flung themselves into the midst of the pursuing force, which was quite unprepared for an attack, and in a short



NAPOLEON BONAPARTE AS LIEUTENANT OF ARTILLERY.

time put it to the most absolute rout which can be conceived. And this was only one among a hundred instances in which Napoleon's genius found resources to meet such difficulties as would infallibly have ruined any other general, and to turn them to means of victory.

After an expedition to Egypt and Syria, the aims of which were

frustrated by the English, Napoleon returned to Paris, and was appointed in 1800 First Consul, with almost unlimited power for the government of the Republic.

CHAPTER LX.

THE CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE.

From A.D. 1800 to A.D. 1815.

ON being raised to the Consulate, Napoleon had to think of the best means of restoring the internal prosperity of France. For this purpose tranquillity was desirable, and he accordingly made a proposal of peace to England, the most bitter of all the enemies of France. At an early stage of the Revolution a work of extraordinary eloquence against it had been published by the patriotic statesman Edmund Burke, and this had inspired his countrymen with a stern determination to war it down. In a series of sea-fights they had destroyed a great part of the French fleet; and though their military expeditions at this time were feeble and unsuccessful, they constantly supplied the Continental Powers with the money needed for war with France. Napoleon's attempt for peace was, therefore, unsuccessful, as the English Minister replied that King George the Third could see no chance of it on any terms short of the recall to the French throne of the exiled Bourbon family.

The war was, therefore, to continue. In order that the means for it might not be wanting, the First Consul, with consummate skill, brought into perfect order the taxation of France. His

genius next showed itself by the construction of the Code Napoleon, in which, though assisted by the best lawyers of his time, he constantly, by his own keenness of intelligence, threw light on the most difficult questions. When France was by these means enabled to stand the burthen of a great war, he arranged, in 1803, an enormous expedition for the invasion of England. Three thousand vessels of various sizes were collected in the harbour of Boulogne; and his soldiers were trained to complete skill in all the necessary arrangements. The descent was to take place as soon as, by some manœuvre, the French fleet could be enabled to command the English Channel even for a few days. With this view Napoleon ordered his admirals to sail to the West Indies, drawing after them Nelson and the English fleet. They were then instantly to make sail back to Europe, and it was hoped they might arrive off the coast of France at least a few days before the return of Nelson. The secret was so well kept, that only one English officer, the celebrated Lord Collingwood, appears to have divined it. It happened, however, that Sir Robert Calder, with an English squadron, met the French fleet near the entrance of the Channel. He at once engaged them, and in repelling his attack they were driven so far down the wind that the chance of their working up again before Nelson's return was at an end. Thus England was saved from the greatest danger which she had incurred since the Spanish Armada, for a great part of her troops were mere untrained militia, and what chance they would have had of successfully defending their country we may see from the fact that, when Napoleon, with his usual promptitude, broke up the Boulogne camp and ordered his troops to Germany, this very same army, in the course of the next two years, succeeded in utterly routing the disciplined troops of Austria and Prussia, the two great military monarchies of the Continent, at the battles of Austerlitz and Jena respectively.

In 1804 Napoleon had been appointed Emperor of the French, and the wars which followed his elevation extended his dominion over nearly the whole of the Continent. Although almost the last fleet of France had been annihilated by Nelson in the great battle of Trafalgar, Napoleon still claimed the right to close all the ports of Europe against English merchandise, in the hope of at length exhausting the supplies of money by which such repeated wars were kindled against him. This ordinance is generally known by the name of the "Continental System." But, meanwhile, a trifling and almost accidental expedition of some English troops to Portugal in 1807 had developed into a war which ultimately did much to ruin the great French warrior. The command of this expedition was given to Sir Arthur Wellesley. His troops instantly established their superiority in the field to those of France; and by skilful generalship retreating when too hard pressed, striking back-handed blows as he went, and then advancing again when the difficulties of subsisting forced his enemies to separate, Wellington managed constantly to paralyse three or four armies, each more numerous than his own. This war went on till 1812; and by that time Lord Wellington had forced the last French regiment to cross the Pyrenees in retreat, and was himself ready to invade their country. Just at this time the Emperor had been engaged in a gigantic expedition against Russia, in which all the forces of the enormous confederacy which he ruled had been hurled against that empire. He penetrated to Moscow; but had hardly reached it when, with a determination worthy of the ancient Romans, the Russians resolved on burning their beloved and venerable capital rather than allow it to shelter the hated invader. This was done; and the French had to begin, at the outset of the winter, a terrible march of 2,000 miles through frost and snow, always harassed by the Russian cavalry, and often finding the roads barred and the bridges broken just before they reached them. The result was that out of an army of 500,000

men hardly 50,000 escaped ; the rest had strewn the icy wastes with their exhausted remains. All Germany now rose against its oppressor. The terrible battle of Leipzig in 1813 rolled back a fresh tide of French invasion ; and, after a defence of the French frontier which equalled any military feat which he had ever performed, Napoleon abdicated the throne, and received the sovereignty of the small but important isle of Elba. Here he occupied himself in developing the resources of his narrow dominion, and, it is said, found more difficulty in governing it than he had before in ruling Europe. On one occasion he gave his guards an order (afterwards recalled) to destroy the town of Capoliberi, because its citizens refused to pay their quota of the impositions which he demanded, saying that they did not know who this Napoleon might be that he should presume to tax them.

Meanwhile, the Count of Provence, brother of Louis the Sixteenth, and long an exile in England, had been placed on the throne of his ancestors under the name of Louis the Eighteenth ; but before he was well settled in his kingdom all Europe was startled with the intelligence that Napoleon had escaped from Elba. On the 1st of March, 1815, he had landed at Cannes, and at once marched towards Paris. The soldiers sent to stop him deserted in large bodies. Marshal Ney, who had promised to bring Napoleon as a prisoner to Louis' feet, was carried away by the impulse of old remembrances, and followed his soldiers' example. The King fled, and for a "hundred days" the French Empire was restored. But the forces of England and Prussia were instantly sent to Belgium, and those of Austria and Russia were not far behind. Hearing that Wellington with the English, and Blucher with the Prussians, were posted in advance of Brussels, Napoleon managed with the most extraordinary secrecy to attack them simultaneously long before it was thought possible he could be near. The English stood firm at Quatre-Bras, and

thus hindered him from gaining command at that point of the road to Brussels. A few miles further east, at Ligny, the Prussians were posted in a somewhat defective position. Accordingly, they were forced to retreat by a tremendous attack directed by Napoleon in person ; but it was found impossible to hinder them from falling back in the direction of Waterloo, to which the English had also retreated, according to previous arrangement, when they heard that the Prussians had given way. On the next day, June 18th, 1815, the English held their own, assisted by a few German and Belgian troops, from the dawn of a summer day till the evening ; and then, encouraged by the near approach of the Prussians, who had up to that moment found it impossible to reach them, they made a desperate final charge, which drove the French army into headlong rout. For a description of the fearful scene which followed when the Prussian army, comparatively fresh, came up and undertook the pursuit of the broken French, the reader may be referred to MM. Erckmann-Chatrian's excellent tale of "Waterloo," where a most thrilling description of the retreat is given.

The allies now refused to grant any terms to Napoleon. After a while he surrendered to Captain Maitland, the commander of the *Bellerophon*, and was taken to England. Orders, however, were given that he should not be allowed to land ; and within a few days he was sent as a prisoner to St. Helena, there to be watched most strictly, lest he should again escape and make new battles like that of Waterloo unavoidable. In this stern seclusion he lived till his death, in 1821. There are, and probably always will be, differences of opinion about his character as a man and as a sovereign. Beyond all doubt, his fondness for war was the cause of terrible calamities to his country ; and these have since been increased by the ambition springing from the very remembrance of his hundred victories. Great warrior though he was, he could sometimes stoop to the basest treachery ; as when he kidnapped

from the territory of Baden the Duc d'Enghien, a nephew of Louis the Sixteenth, whom he wrongfully suspected of conspiracy against him ; and, after a mock trial and sentence, had him instantly shot in the castle-ditch at Vincennes.

Probably of all his actions the one which most benefited France was his restoration of the clergy to its various parishes. Purified by adversity, these good men came back, bringing peace and happiness with them. Even now France has not abolished his code of law ; and several nations of the Continent have also adopted it.

Nor has the French nation ceased to bless some consequences, at least, of the great Revolution ; for it established, as possessors of the land of France, an immense number of small proprietors, the most industrious and economical of mankind, who take such good care of their small means, that poverty such as that which we often see in England is almost unknown among them, and in time of need almost any sum can be obtained out of their savings for public purposes of importance.

CHAPTER LXI.

LOUIS THE EIGHTEENTH AND CHARLES THE TENTH.

From A.D. 1815 to A.D. 1830.

FEW sovereigns ever ascended a throne amid such strange disadvantages as Louis the Eighteenth. He had now twice been restored by foreign bayonets, and the signals for his reinstatement had been the crushing disasters of Leipzig and Waterloo. When he began his rule, a million of enemies were encamped on the French soil, with no chance of being entirely withdrawn till the huge military ransom of 700,000,000 of francs (equivalent to £28,000,000) was paid to the last farthing. The French army had been ordered to retreat behind the Loire, and with intense unwillingness had changed the tricolor, the symbol of their many victories, for the white flag of the ancient monarchy. Louis' brother and heir, the Comte d'Artois, the head of the uncompromising royalists, had again and again endangered his return by his indiscreet acts, and several of his ministers could by no means be trusted to serve him faithfully.

Yet the King, aged as he was, applied himself heart and soul to the work before him. Like Charles the Second in England, he dated his first acts as happening in the 19th year of his reign, which he considered to begin from the moment when the unhappy little dauphin, otherwise called Louis the Seventeenth, expired in prison. He had two nephews, sons of the Comte d'Artois, both men of high character—the Dukes of Berri and Angoulême. The latter was married to Marie Thérèse, the daughter of Louis the

Sixteenth, who had gone through the long anguish of imprisonment with her parents, but had been saved from their fate by being exchanged for some eminent Frenchmen, who had fallen into the hands of the Austrians. It was hardly possible to see this lady without emotion, so deeply was the mark of these former sorrows stamped upon her beautiful face. The King himself also had a most dignified and winning presence, the influence of which was felt by all who approached him, and a fine tact which seldom failed him in time of need.

The first disturbances which arose in his reign were several passionate Bonapartist insurrections in the south of France. These were put down without much difficulty, and the leaders were executed. In Marseilles and some other places a trouble of the opposite kind arose; for there the royalists attempted to massacre the Bonapartists, and in several instances succeeded. But in a little while Louis reduced the country to tranquillity; and so excellent was his management in finance, that the war-ransom was paid (having first been reduced to 260,000,000 of francs), and the country evacuated by the foreign armies before the seven years of occupation agreed upon were half over.

Shortly after this it was suspected, with reason, that the King of France had joined the Holy Alliance. This was a league of kings, headed by the Emperor Alexander of Russia, with the intention of repressing in every way all popular movements throughout Europe. Louis' adhesion to it rapidly destroyed his popularity; and he was soon warned of the fact by the atrocious murder of his nephew, the Duc de Berri, who died entreating with his last breath that his slayer, Louvel, might be spared the fate he deserved. At the time of his death the duke had only daughters, but a few months after it was born a prince, who now represents the claim of his family to the throne, and is known as the Comte de Chambord.

In 1822, the year which followed the death of the Duc de

Berri, France was involved in war with Spain, in spite of the fact that the same family occupied both thrones, or rather because of it. Spain had long been struggling against its King, who had been restored by the loyalty of the people, but refused to grant them the liberty which they had so well earned. Accordingly, an absolute civil war had broken out between the troops adhering to the King and those who were in favour of the constitution. Louis the Eighteenth felt inclined to support his kinsman ; as he was persuaded that, if monarchy was abolished in Spain, the next attempt of the revolutionary party would be to do away with it in France also. He was encouraged in this belief by the fact that Barcelona and Madrid had long been used by the discontented French as centres for the management of insurrection at home. Application was first made to the Sovereigns of Europe, then assembled at the Congress of Verona. The English minister, the Duke of Wellington, alone urged that internal struggles are always best settled within a nation ; for that the victory which one side gains over the other by foreign aid has never any solid or permanent results. The Emperors of Russia and Austria were, however, otherwise minded ; and, accordingly, the King of France obtained the sanction of the congress for his attack. It must be observed that in making this war Louis had an object which probably he would have been slow to acknowledge openly, but which was clearly brought to view by his subordinates. This was the reconciling to the monarchy of the French army, which now consisted partly of restored royalists and partly of the soldiers and officers bred under Napoleon. Between these two sections intense jealousy still existed ; and it was thought that nothing would lay this feeling to rest so completely as the remembrances of a campaign made by both of them in common. They would forget ill-will when once they had been together under fire. Accordingly, an expeditionary force, under the command of the Duc d'Angoulême, was ordered to cross the Pyrenees. This they

did, and advanced, almost unresisted, as far as Madrid. The Cortes, or Parliament of Spain, then retreated upon Cadiz, carrying with them King Ferdinand as a prisoner, with the view of gaining a kind of sanction for their acts by his presence. The French army followed, and besieged the city. After a while Ferdinand was surrendered to them, and took possession of his kingdom.

The French Government might now rest, and form an estimate of the value of their exploit. The King whom they had restored was a man of the most vindictive and treacherous character. In restoring him they had expressly disclaimed all right to interfere in his internal administration. Accordingly, they were obliged to stand by and look on, with unavailing protests, while he treated with the most ruthless severity all the heads of the opposing party whom he could either hunt down or inveigle into his power. General Riego and others were thus barbarously executed; the mob, who a few months before had applauded them to the echo, being now ready to utter execrations round their scaffolds. But the consequences were far from stopping here. The protest of England against the attack had been contemptuously disregarded. Accordingly, the English Government set itself to find means of counterpoising the weight thus thrown into the scale of absolute and tyrannical power. And such means were not hard to discover. Almost at the same moment the South American colonies of Spain had sprung into universal revolt against the unskilful and selfish administration of the mother country. In every direction new republics, such as those of Peru and Chili, were springing up; and by giving to them a hearty support against Spain, Mr. Canning, the English minister, did far more for Spanish liberty than Louis the Eighteenth had accomplished against it; and, as he said himself, he 'called the New World into existence to redress the balance of the Old.'

But a still more important consequence of the Spanish expedi-

tion was the great spur which it gave to the monarchical and ecclesiastical party in France. This had hitherto been kept down by the prudence of Louis. But this check was now to be removed. The first king of the Restoration died on the 15th of September, 1821, and was succeeded, under the name of Charles the Tenth, by his brother the Comte d'Artois, whose character has been briefly indicated in the first words of this chapter.

Hardly had the new King ascended the throne when some measures of decided hostility to the principles established in France by the Revolution were at once carried in the Chambers. One of these was a vote of £28,000,000, to be raised by a loan, for the purpose of indemnifying those who had lost their estates by emigrating in 1792. The reasons for this act were that it appeared unfair that those who had lost all for the monarchy should not profit by the Restoration. It was also argued that by accepting compensation for their lost lands, the original owners would make any further claims for restoration of them impossible, and that thus the persons who had purchased them during the Revolution would now find them much more valuable, on account of the greater security of their title. But on the other hand it could not be denied that many of the emigrants thus compensated had borne arms against the country; besides which an enormous portion of the indemnity was to be given to individual nobles already very wealthy, the house of Orleans alone receiving £560,000. Thus the chief operation of the act seemed to be hostile to the Revolution. Another act restored the right of primogeniture; that is, it enacted that the whole lands of a family might be left to the eldest son, instead of divided among the members of the family. A third act gave a still more clear indication of a wish to bring back the false religious views of earlier times. This was a law inflicting, not merely death, but preliminary tortures, on any one found guilty of outraging holy things. Such a law brought back the memory of cruelties which

had horrified Europe in the time of Louis the Fifteenth, when proclaimed by the trumpet-tongue of Voltaire; and seemed to find its natural completion in a bill prohibiting any printing of books without the consent of an ecclesiastical censor. The last of these measures was indeed withdrawn, as it was perceived that rebellion was inevitable if it were passed; but, in spite of all remonstrance, the Sacrilege Bill became law, the bishops and other ecclesiastics in the house persisting in their resolution to vote for it.

These laws had already made the throne of Charles the Tenth totter, when matters became much worse by his appointing to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs the ultra-royalist Prince Polignac, who was known to be in favour of the extremest power claimed by the Church. The other members of the Ministry were almost equally unpopular. In fact there was good reason for the apprehension generally felt. The King had begun to say that his brother's act in conceding the Charter had been a rash one; and the watchword of the court in general was that the country must be taught to know its master. Accordingly the struggle began at once. An address was carried in parliament by a large majority, protesting against the appointment of the Ministry; and they, on their part, answered the challenge by depriving of their posts under government all the members of parliament who held any such, and had voted for the address.

A new election was now at hand; and the King himself actually issued a circular calling upon France to support the crown. But so entirely unsuccessful was this measure, that the members who had voted the address were everywhere re-elected. Meanwhile two marked men had come forth as leaders or the popular side, M. Guizot, so celebrated for his historical works, and for his actions as minister under Louis Philippe, and M. Pertyer, one of the chiefs of the French bar. Their task became easier from the wild plans proposed by the ministers; some of whom wished

to annul the elections of all who had signed the address, others to abolish the parliament and replace it by a council named by the ministers themselves. The resolution finally adopted was hardly less insane. It was to dissolve the new parliament before it met; then, by an exercise of the royal power, to alter the franchise so as to put the future elections into the hands of safe men; and, lastly, to suspend by proclamation the liberty of the press, so as to make it impossible for the popular party to combine against the ministry. These measures were eagerly adopted by the King, who thought that he should thus avoid the fatal system of concessions which had led on Louis the Sixteenth to his ruin. The ministers, not to be outdone, held that they were thus closing the sacred portals of the constitution against the inroads of a thoughtless and unmanageable mob.

On the 25th of July, 1830, the fatal ordinances were signed; the head of the Parisian police, M. Mangin, telling the members that they had only to go boldly forward, for that Paris would not stir, do what they might. For this he declared that he would answer with his head. It was agreed that Marshal Marmont, the well-known lieutenant of Napoleon, should command the troops in Paris, and that the ordinances should be published the next day in the *Moniteur*. Accordingly this was done, and the news of them gradually spread through Paris, creating universal consternation as they went. The vast tribe of newspaper writers and dealers felt themselves on the brink of ruin; bankers foresaw that their credit might be unable to stand, as the general alarm would lead to a run upon them. The public funds fell rapidly. Still the day passed without any outbreak; and the ministers began to hope that the danger was over. The King even went out to a shooting party at Rambouillet.

In the course of the day, however, a protest against the violation of press liberties had been drawn up and published in the principal journals. On this the police were ordered to seize the

presses and type of the *Temps*. This action, done in defiance of the law, excited the people to fury. Vast crowds began to assemble in the streets, and struggles soon arose between them and the gendarmes. A few shots were fired, some of them telling on the crowd. The tumult soon became universal; as if by magic, muskets, pikes, and tricoloured flags appeared among the crowd, and the scholars of the Ecole Polytechnique volunteered to organize them. As they were not at once attacked, they spent the night in collecting arms and ammunition from every quarter; and by the morning 100,000 citizens were possessed of weapons, while Marmont could only muster 16,000 soldiers to oppose them, and had only the stock of ammunition usual in time of peace.

It should be remarked that the leaders of the popular party were most averse to any but a legal resistance, and would have adopted no other had not matters been hurried on by the precipitancy of the Government. As it was, they could only stand apart and see the Revolution pursue its course. So Marmont's troops held their posts as they could under the hot July sun, many of them without food or water; some declining to fight against the people, others doing the work half-heartedly, and a few only struggling to the death. Gradually the troops which remained obedient to orders were driven in upon the Tuileries and the buildings near it; yet the ministry remained obstinate. No idea of concession seemed to reach their mind; and the King himself, safe in the palace of St. Cloud, listened to the sound of the far-off cannonade, and flattered himself that the dread of anarchy must soon bring Paris to his feet. It never once struck him that the knell of his reign and dynasty was sounding in that distant roar.

Events were now passing with a rapidity which he little expected. While he was forming a new ministry, thinking of recalling the obnoxious ordinances, and debating points of eti-

quette, the troops were deserting and the insurrection spreading wider and wider. In Paris the guidance of affairs had passed into the hands of the veteran Lafayette, once the champion of America, and of M. Lafitte, a banker of liberal opinions. With the help of M. Thiers, these statesmen drew up a manifesto, recommending that Charles the Tenth should be deposed, and Louis Philippe, Duke of Orleans, appointed king by the national voice. "The Duke," said this paper, "has never fought against us; he has defended France against Austrian invasion; he will be a citizen-king; he wears the tricolor; he makes no claim to the throne, but waits for our summons; let us, therefore, call upon him to accept the Charter and become our king."

This was done, and Louis Philippe became "constitutional king," not of France, but of the French people, whose choice had raised him to the throne. Charles the Tenth, with his family, stayed for awhile at the small palace of the Trianon, near Versailles, hoping that some arrangement might be made by which the Duc de Bordeaux might succeed to the throne. When it became evident that this was out of the question, he proceeded by slow journeys towards Cherbourg. It deserves remark that, while none of the fallen ministers would have found his life safe for a moment on the road traversed by the King, no attempt was made to annoy or insult him. At last he arrived at the port; and after a solemn farewell to those of his officers who remained with him, he called for the standards of his guards, saying that the time would come when his grandson would restore them to these faithful troops. The moorings were then cast off and the vessel sailed. Her destination was Portsmouth, and from thence the fugitives proceeded to their place of exile. This was at first Lulworth, in Dorsetshire, and afterwards the palace of Holyrood, in Edinburgh. There the "grey discrowned" King lived in retirement. In 1836 he died at Görtz, and was followed, in 1844, by his son, the Duc d'Angoulême. Thus the hopes of the

Legitimist party became concentrated on the youthful Comte de Chambord.


CHAPTER LXII.

LOUIS PHILIPPE AND THE REPUBLIC.

From A.D. 1830 to A.D. 1851.

THE new King of the French had gone, in the course of his life, through the most extraordinary vicissitudes. When his father was guillotined, he escaped from Paris and crossed the Alps almost barefoot. After this he had gained his living as a teacher of mathematics in Switzerland, and then lived obscurely in Philadelphia. He was now to undertake the government of a country which had, by a successful revolution, seated him on the throne ; yet the ruling passion of his heart was a dread and hatred of revolution, and a distrust of liberty as leading to it ; and in this he was strongly seconded by his ministers, especially by M. Guizot, whose father had also been executed at Lyons, under circumstances of great atrocity, leaving his son, as a young boy, to the care of an admirable mother, who supported her family by her own exertions. Accordingly, the life of Louis Philippe may be described as a constant attempt to deprive the people of any share in self-government. For this he adopted a great variety of means.

First, the number of electors was confined within very narrow limits ; no one having the privilege of voting for members of the Chamber of Deputies unless he paid eight pounds a year in



direct taxes. This practically confined all power in the state to less than 200,000 Frenchmen ; the whole population of the country being not less than 30,000,000. Moreover, out of this small number of electors, a large proportion were bribed by the Government, not directly with money, but with the many profitable employments at their disposal, to vote for candidates acceptable to the ministry. Another method adopted for keeping down all popular movements was a series of cruel prosecutions directed against the editors of newspapers. One gentleman was accused of libelling the King, and condemned to several years' imprisonment. Being just married, he was hurried away from his bride, and fainted several times while his head was being shaved in the vestibule of the prison. Yet the remarks thus harshly treated were no more than we now see every day in newspapers, and were, moreover, justified by the prominent part taken by the King himself in politics, which appeared to make his actions as fair a mark for criticism as those of his ministers.

From these causes the unpopularity of Louis Philippe soon ran to a height exceeding that for which Charles the Tenth had suffered so heavily ; and it was further increased by a weakness in the King's character which Frenchmen can never regard with any toleration. This was his personal fondness for money. Even when the finances of the State were in such a bad condition that there was a regular annual deficit—that is, that the taxes of the year could not pay for its expenses—Louis Philippe scandalized France by constantly asking for fresh grants for the various members of his family. This was the more offensive since, as we have seen, he had, as Duke of Orleans, recovered at the Restoration the vast property of his family, besides a very large sum out of the fund voted to compensate the emigrants.

His unpopularity weighed heavily on the members of his family. Almost from the moment of his accession, his Queen,

Marie Amélie, was oppressed by a gloomy anxiety which left an indelible mark on her countenance, and for which, as we shall see, there was only too much reason. It had the further effect of making all his actions suspected. Thus, he asked the Chamber for money to construct the fortifications of Paris, on the ground that the Emperor Napoleon had already planned these works, and that it was madness to leave the heart of France thus undefended. They altogether refused the grant; but this did not hinder the continuance of the works, which went on, though no one knew how the money for them was found. Hence arose the preposterous notion that the detached forts round Paris were intended to act, not against enemies from without, but against the citizens themselves in case of revolt. And so strong did the republican feeling become, that it was thought necessary, after terrible riots at Lyons, to prosecute a large number of persons holding these opinions. Not less than 160 were selected for trial; and, when the court was opened for this purpose, the utmost scandal arose. For the prisoners bade defiance to the judges, returning taunt for taunt, declaring that Louis Philippe was a tyrant, and threatening him with the tyrant's fate. The words had a terrible meaning at the time; for conspiracy after conspiracy was formed to murder him. Sometimes a fanatic would take deliberate aim at him with a pistol, as he was driving in the midst of his family. Others constructed at their windows, in streets where the King would pass, whole batteries of gun-barrels, to be fired at his carriage. The discharge of one of these, by a wretch named Fieschi, killed Marshal Mortier, one of Napoleon's lieutenants, and not less than twenty other persons. The King was also peculiarly liable to accidents; on one occasion a drawbridge gave way as he was driving over it; and Louis Philippe, with his daughter, narrowly escaped drowning in the moat beneath. But he passed through all as if he had a charmed life; sometimes hardly himself able to conceive how he had escaped. Meanwhile

still greater dangers were growing up around him. The first years of his reign had been times of universal distress ; and the watchword of the Lyons rioters had been the terrible one, "Live by working, or die with arms in your hands ! " When the riots were put down, the spirit which had produced them became even stronger. Powerful and popular thinkers arose, who were discontented with the existing laws of property ; and these inspired the people with a notion that the existence of rich men was a wrong to them : some even went so far as to declare that property must be in itself a robbery, since nature makes all men equal, and gives them equal rights to enjoyment.

All through the reign of Louis Philippe an attempt had been made to divert the public attention from politics by military glory. In the last days of Charles the Tenth, an expedition had been sent to Africa, and had effected the conquest of Algiers. This enterprise was now prosecuted with great vigour. From Algiers, the capital, expeditions were sent out which first subdued the whole of the Tell—that is, of the lands capable of cultivation along the line of the Atlas range—and then tried to extend their power over the Little Desert, which is the name given to the pastoral regions up to the edge of the great Sahara. Three governments were thus formed, those of Algiers, Oran, and Constantineh. Gradually Algiers itself became a splendid city on the European model, and a favourite resort in winter for consumptive patients, who, fifty years before, could only have gone there as miserable captives.

France now invited colonists from all Europe, particularly Germany, to come and settle in her new territory ; sometimes granting them so much assistance as fairly to sap the spirit of industry within them. Yet it required men of the sternest mould to stand against the dangers of their position. Often it happened that their houses and orchards were swept into desolation in a moment by some Arab incursion. Especially was this

the case when a chieftain named Abd-el-Kader succeeded in getting up a regular crusade against the foreigners. Then the settlements were destroyed almost up to the gates of Algiers ; and it was with the greatest difficulty that a new commander-in-chief, Marshal Bugeaud, succeeded, partly by military means, partly by bribery, in breaking up the confederacy formed against him. After a further attempt to draw the whole forces of Morocco into the holy war against the Franks, Abd-el-Kader at length surrendered, and was for some years ordered to reside in strict custody at Amboise.

It is impossible not to wish well to this enterprise of colonization. With great determination and considerable success, the French governors of Algeria have tried to reduce the country to tranquillity. Even up to quite late times the quiet has been liable to disturbance, especially from the Kabyles—a fierce group of tribes inhabiting the mountains between Algiers and Constantine, whom it was at first thought well to leave in entire independence. But the colonies are now more peaceful, and highly beneficial to France from the outlet which they afford to the most adventurous part of her population, who might otherwise create disturbance at home. It is also a school of endurance to the army, as fully 90,000 men are constantly employed there. In fact, Algeria is, or will be, a field of employment for Frenchmen, much like that which India affords to the English.

Before we relate the stormy end of Louis Philippe's reign, some mention should be made of an event calculated to furnish very salutary lessons to thinking people. Alarmed at the prospect that the young Queen of Spain, Isabella, might form a marriage with a prince connected with the royal family of England, Louis Philippe arranged in 1846 a second marriage, between his son, the Duc de Montpensier, and the younger sister of Isabella, who, he thought, was likely to inherit the throne of Spain. The alarm produced by this act was great ; many politicians saw in it an

attempt to combine the crowns of France and Spain in the same family. So far did this idea go that there was actually a thought of war to hinder this distant and obscure danger from ever becoming real. It was happily averted ; but little did those who thought of it divine how superfluous coming events were about to make such a conflict. The family of Louis Philippe was to be hurled from the throne of France, and Isabella's, for a time, from that of Spain ; thus dispelling, like the morning cloud, all fear that the two countries would ever come under one ruler.

There was one person who might perhaps have reconciled the conflicting parties in France. This was the Duke of Orleans, Louis Philippe's heir. His generous and straightforward temper made him universally beloved ; and the rejoicing was great when he married the Princess Helène of Mecklenburg, a lady like himself in spirit, and loving her adopted country with an absolute passion. Hardly, however, had she given her husband a son (who was at once created Comte de Paris), when, by a melancholy carriage accident, the Duke, her husband, was killed. The loss of this hope for the future at once destroyed one of the chief motives for patience on the popular side ; and in 1848 a new revolution, strongly resembling in its character that of 1830, drove Louis Philippe to take refuge in England, as his predecessor had done before him.

The present disturbances, however, were complicated by a circumstance which had been absent in 1830. This was the prevalence of socialist opinions among the workmen of Paris. One of their maxims was that the Government was bound to find employment for all who were willing to work. Large national workshops were accordingly opened by the Government of M. de Lamartine, which had risen to the conduct of affairs in the midst of the Revolution. It was, however, soon necessary to dissolve them, as those who professed to work in them did nothing, but claimed, notwithstanding, to receive their daily

wages. This drain on the treasury was the more intolerable, as the popular Government had thought it necessary to abolish several of the taxes specially weighing on the people. Accordingly the national workshops were closed ; and this was the signal for a fearful conflict in the streets. Again and again the insurgents rose and tried to force their way across the bridges of the Seine into the wealthy parts of the town. But the Government, which had now come into the hands of General Cavaignac, had succeeded in causing division in the ranks of the popular party. Large masses of them had been enrolled in a corps called the Garde Mobile, and were willing to stand in defence of order. By these and by the regular army the revolt was kept at bay, swept down by cannon shot as the insurgents tried to debouch upon the bridges, and finally crushed by the arrest and transportation of its leaders.

The constitution of France had now been drawn up. It was to be a republic, with a President, elected for four years by universal suffrage. It was expected that General Cavaignac would be the chosen candidate. But those who were in the secret thought otherwise. A new competitor presented himself in Prince Louis Napoleon, the nephew of Napoleon the First. The Prince was little known at the time ; he had, it is true, made two attempts to gain the throne of France, but these had been ridiculous in character, and had been still further dwarfed in their proportions by the clemency with which he had been treated in both cases. Now his hour was come. The Treaty of Vienna, on the fall of Napoleon, had declared that no Bonaparte was henceforward ever to sit on the throne of France. The French people had often chafed at this restriction on their liberty of self-government. Now they saw the opportunity of tearing the treaty into fragments, and hurling these, as it were, in the face of Europe. Therefore Louis Napoleon was elected President by an enormous majority ; and took, as we shall see in the next

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chapter, a solemn oath of fidelity to the constitution which he was called on to administer.

CHAPTER LXIII.

THE SECOND EMPIRE.

From A.D. 1848 to A.D. 1870.

PRINCE LOUIS NAPOLEON, son of Louis Bonaparte, King of Holland, and of Hortense Beauharnais, step-daughter of the Emperor Napoleon, assumed, as we have seen, the administration of France with the title of President, to which he was elected by universal suffrage ; his majority consisting of not less than 5,000,000 voters. As his term of power was to last only for somewhat more than three years, the remembrance of the turbulent events of 1848 soon gave rise to an apprehension that, when the time came for the election of a new President, the streets of Paris might again run with blood ; as no party would be willing to see any candidate elected over the head of the one they preferred, and it was considered as even possible that a government might come into power whose policy would be to shake once more the very foundations of property, for the benefit of the lower classes of society.

In order rightly to understand the events which followed, we must remark that the President, on taking office, had to pledge himself, by an oath of remarkable solemnity, to attempt no change in the constitution during his period of office ; and that he was the only Frenchman so pledged. The reason of this exception as regards the President was that, as commander of the army, it was considered that the temptation of changing his power to a

military despotism required, in his case, to be counteracted by an engagement that he would not do so.

Now it cannot be denied that, in matters of state, the principle that "necessity has no law" may sometimes be held sufficient to set aside even solemn engagements. If, therefore, it ever had been made out that France, or even Paris, was in danger of falling into the hands of a reckless and destructive mob government, it might seem that very strong measures might blamelessly be adopted to guard against such a disaster.

It cannot, however, be said that at this time any such danger had at all clearly manifested itself. It was, therefore, with surprise that Europe listened to almost daily discussions in the newspapers and elsewhere, as to *when* the Prince President would effect his impending "Coup d'Etat"; that is, arrest all the political leaders opposed to him, annul the republican constitution, and crush all opposition, in the streets or elsewhere, with a strong hand. This was finally done on the 2nd of December, 1851. Generals Cavaignac, Changarnier, Lamoricière, and Bèdeau, the most distinguished officers of the army, with M. Thiers and a large number of anti-Bonapartist statesmen, were arrested in their beds, and sent to prison; the troops on the Boulevards fired on the people, sometimes with next to no provocation, and Louis Napoleon was declared Emperor, subject, however, to a general vote, or "plébiscite," such as had raised him at first to the Presidency. We should remark that his title of Napoleon the Third suggested that Napoleon had been really succeeded by his son, the Duke of Reichstadt, under the name of Napoleon the Second, as he would have been if his offer to abdicate in that prince's favour had been accepted.

The principal event of the presidency of Louis Napoleon was the siege of Rome, for the purpose of restoring the power of the Pope there, in opposition to the passionate desire of the Italians for its overthrow. His resolution to continue this policy of his

predecessors must be attributed to his desire to conciliate the large masses of electors in France, to whose votes it was his habit to appeal on great occasions, and very many of whom considered it sacrilege to attempt anything against the papal government. To gratify this feeling, General Oudinot was despatched to Civit  Vecchia with a considerable army ; and the city of Rome, which was in the hands of a triumvirate, formed after the expulsion of the Pope, was at once besieged. The defence was long and determined ; but after a month of open trenches a breach was effected near the church of San Pietro in Montorio, and the French entered the city—Garibaldi and the other republican leaders leaving it almost at the same moment by an opposite gate. After this the Pope was restored to his dominions, and maintained in power for many years by a French army of occupation.

Napoleon the Third, fortified on his throne by a new pl biscite, now occupied the Tuileries instead of the modest Elys e which had been his home as President ; and reigned with imperial pomp and splendour. Within two years began the events which led to the terrible and destructive Crimean War of 1854-55. This conflict arose from the determination of the Russian Emperor Nicholas to occupy the northern provinces of Turkey ; and after various military operations of an indecisive character on the Danube and in Asia Minor, concentrated itself round the siege of Sebastopol, the gigantic fortress of the Crimea, in which for many years past the Russians had been collecting a vast store of material of war, to be used, whenever circumstances were favourable, for a rush on Constantinople.

Now for the first time French and English national armies were to fight side by side ; the former commanded by Marshal St. Arnaud, the latter by Lord Raglan, an officer trained under Wellington in the Peninsula. Both armies landed near Old Fort on the 14th and 15th of September, 1854, and were imme-

diately employed in storming the Russians' strong positions on the range just south of the river Alma. Delighted at being called upon at the very outset of the campaign, for an act of such daring, the armies marched straight up the deadly hill; and the Russians were soon in retreat. This operation being effected, it would seem that the invaders might have advanced straight upon Sebastopol, which was far from being prepared for defence. Unfortunately, their intelligence was insufficient; and, to the astonishment of the Russians, they marched past the city, occupied the harbours of Balaklava and Kamiesch as their base of operations, and began a siege in form. In the following October occurred the battle of Balaklava, with the extraordinary charge of the English heavy cavalry, and the well known adventure of the "Light Brigade." On the 5th of November following, the Russians fought the battle of Inkerman, by marching out by the head of the harbour, and attacking the English force from the outside as well as from the city. With immense difficulty these held out till supported by the French troops under General Bosquet, who, with the greatest bravery, left parts of their own position undefended, in order to maintain that of the English. In the subsequent battle of the Tchernaya, the brunt of the attack was borne by an Italian force, which had been sent to take part in the war; the object of their Government being mainly to vindicate the right of Italy to a due portion of influence in affairs of European interest.

The winter of 1854 had now arrived: the plain from Balaklava to the camp was a sea of deep mud; no roads had been made: and the difficulty of provisioning the armies was extreme. Accordingly both the French and English suffered terrible privations; and were obliged to look on while the Russians constructed, under their very eyes, a series of redoubts far stronger than any which had existed before; above all the Malakhoff. The consequence was that more than two-thirds of the year 1855

was expended in the mere preparations for the final assault, which was delivered only on the 20th of September. In this the terrible Malakhoff was seized by the French attack ; and the remains of the garrison at once withdrew across the harbour, by a cracking bridge of boats, to the northern side of the city, which they held until peace put an end to the siege. It had been impossible all along for the allied fleets to force their way into the port, as several Russian line-of-battle ships had been sunk in the entrance, where their masts and spars made an impenetrable barrier all through the war ; and the utmost available power of marine artillery had proved insufficient against the granite forts which guarded the harbour-mouth.

Perhaps no siege on record ever produced more sustained and heroic endurance on all sides than that of Sebastopol : the simple devotedness of the Russians (as described in the memoirs of Todleben), being at least as amazing as the dogged tenacity of the Allies. The results of the war may be summed up briefly. The power of Russia was crippled for many years, and not less than 300,000 of her soldiers perished in the siege and in the fearful winter journeys by which they were hurried up to the scene of action. Sebastopol was almost dismantled, and has not since been restored. A Russian fortress in the Baltic, Bomarsund in the Aland Isles, which would have been as formidable to the north of Europe as Sebastopol to the south, was destroyed without a siege, being still unfinished when the war began. By the terms of peace (which have since been partly repudiated by Russia), the Black Sea was "neutralized"—that is, neither Russia nor any other nation was to be allowed to send ships of war into it. Thus the danger arising from Russia's systematic advances towards Constantinople was staved off for a time ; and she has been deprived of the paramount influence in European politics which for many years she had exercised for the purpose of repressing all movements towards liberty in Eastern Europe.

As the subsequent years of Napoleon the Third were largely occupied by wars, we will take the opportunity of grouping together here some peaceful achievements, which perhaps more than equal any of these wars in the influence which they exercised for the good of mankind.

One of the chief of these is the Commercial Treaty with England, negotiated in 1860. The Emperor, from his long residence in that country, was powerfully struck with the advantage which the two kingdoms might derive from commercial intercourse. France, with her fine manufactures of silks, cambrics, and the like, might, he thought, begin a system of free exchanges for coal, and for the coarser fabrics of England suitable for workmen's clothing. Accordingly he sent for eminent men of business, both French and English, conferred with them himself repeatedly and at great length, and used the whole force of his personal influence in favour of the removal of restrictions on mutual trading. The treaty thus made has since then nearly doubled the foreign commerce of France.

Another enterprise of great usefulness was the canal across the isthmus from Port Said in the Mediterranean to Suez on the Red Sea, constructed by M. Ferdinand Lesseps, with the enthusiastic support of his countrymen. Strange to say, this great work was opposed not only by the English Government (which was, perhaps naturally, unwilling to see a power mainly French establishing itself on its road to India), but also by English engineers, as being visionary and unpractical. They argued that the levels of the two seas are different; that the mud from the Nile must soon fill up any port east of the Delta; that the sands of the desert would choke the canal. To M. Lesseps belongs the credit of having discerned clearly, at an early stage, the groundlessness of all these objections; and the success of the engineering operations followed as a matter of course, when the true character of the enterprise had been thus fairly and completely thought out by its illustrious projector.

A third enterprise was the **Mont Cenis** tunnel, executed conjointly with the Italian Government. It pierces the Alps from Modane to Bardonneche, has a length of nearly eight miles, and reduces the journey from Paris to Turin to little more than twenty hours. A second tunnel under the St. Gothard is in like manner to abridge the journey from Germany by Switzerland into Italy.

The Emperor's constructions in Paris itself were extensive and splendid. A double circuit of "boulevards" was carried round the central parts of the city, greatly adding to its beauty, and at the same time opening out the street communications in such a way as to make rioting there almost impossible. The Rue de Rivoli and many other fine streets have been completed in all their length; the small streets interposing between the Tuileries and the Museum of the Louvre were swept away, and the two palaces united by splendid ranges of building. In the provinces immense pains were taken to restore classical and middle-age buildings; in particular the city of Carcassonne was thus made a complete museum of architectural remains. Finally the Emperor's desire to illustrate the Gallic campaign of Cæsar led to a series of most singular discoveries. The site of the ancient Bibracte was cleared near Autun; the walls and gates of Gergovia (near Clermont) were disinterred; Cæsar's works at Uxellodunum were laid bare; and, above all, the whole details of the siege of Alesia became, from the number of topographical points brought out, as distinct as if the events had happened only a few years ago.

We have now to relate the occurrences which marked the highest point of Louis Napoleon's power and influence. In 1859, he resolved to send an army into Italy, announcing that that country must be free from the Alps to the sea. As Austria was at that time in possession of Lombardy and Venice, from the Adriatic up to the eastern bank of Lake Maggiore, this plan could not be carried out without overcoming a tremendous

resistance. Landing at Genoa in person, and being received with unbounded enthusiasm by the population of the Sardinian provinces, the Emperor advanced northward and took command of his army, the greater part of which had arrived by the Mont Cenis Pass. Crossing the Po at Valenza, he advanced to the Tesino, along the opposite bank of which, near Magenta, the Austrians awaited him. The Emperor himself attacked by the bridge of Buffalora (which the Austrians had not sufficiently destroyed), sending Marshal MacMahon to turn the Austrian left higher up the river. After a fearful struggle, during which he was himself for some time in the utmost danger from the non-arrival of expected troops, the Austrians were driven back, and retreated beyond Milan, which was immediately occupied by the Emperor and his ally the King of Sardinia. Meanwhile, the Austrians had fallen back to the neighbourhood of Mantua, pursued and harassed by Garibaldi and the Italian volunteers, who effectually cut them off from receiving any intelligence. At last they halted at Solferino, along a line of low but rugged hills, extending nearly from the Lake of Garda to the Mincio. The ground by which the French troops, with their allies, were to advance to the attack was at the foot of the hills, and as smooth as a lawn, except that close to their base there were a few small elevations, which enabled them to mask their attacking columns. This circumstance, combined with the superiority of the new rifling in the French field-artillery, enabled the regiments to storm the position; which would otherwise have been impregnable. Within a few days the Emperor had a personal interview at Villafranca, some miles eastward of Solferino, with the Emperor of Austria. At this peace was concluded. Venetia remained in possession of the Austrians, but they ceded Lombardy to the Emperor of the French, to be delivered by him to the King of Sardinia, who thereupon assumed the title of King of Italy. France, accordingly, made this war, not for any interest.


of her own, but for the "idea" of Italian freedom. A vote of the Italian Parliament, however, afterwards transferred to her the country of Savoy—which, being west of the Alps, is naturally part of France—together with the beautiful shore of the Mediterranean up to Nice. A subsequent purchase from the Prince of Monaco added Mentone and Roccabruna to the French territories in this direction. Much disappointment was felt at the Emperor's stopping so far short of his undertaking as to leave Venice and the fortresses still in Austrian hands. His own account of his reasons for making peace was, however, doubtless, the true one ; namely, that other German states were on the point of joining the Austrians ; so that, if the war had continued, a great number of other battles, as fierce and bloody as those of Magenta and Solferino, would have had to be fought.

In 1861 an expedition on a small scale was made to Mexico by France and England conjointly. Its object was, at first, simply to obtain from that republic reparation for some outrages offered to the flags of the respective nations ; and when this was gained, the English withdrew their part of the expedition altogether. But the French commanders, being dissatisfied with the offers made to them, resolved to push their forces into the heart of the country, instead of braving the risks of yellow fever by attempting an occupation of the seaboard district of Vera Cruz. A march to Puebla and Mexico was accordingly resolved upon, and effected by an army under General Forey ; and this success appears to have suggested to the Emperor a singular plan, which requires some explanation.

A terrible civil war had for some time been raging between the Northern and Southern sections of the United States, which made them for awhile unable to interfere in matters beyond their own frontier. As up to this time they had constantly been encroaching upon the Spanish territories, the present time seemed a good opportunity for preventing such advances in future. This, the

Emperor thought, might be accomplished if a strong empire, on the European model, were formed in Mexico. Accordingly arrangements were made for this purpose. A vote was procured in Mexico itself in favour of the Empire. The crown was offered to the Archduke Maximilian, brother of the Emperor of Austria; and, strange to say, was accepted by him. This led to one of the deepest tragedies of our time. For the Archduke, on landing found that his pretensions were not universally accepted; that a strong republican party still remained, headed by Juarez, the late president; that the United States were resolved to acknowledge the old government only; and that a terrible civil war would be necessary before he would be safe on his throne. Maximilian did not shrink from the enterprise, and, after a while, announced that he should treat as rebels those who further resisted his authority; they, in turn, declaring that any such executions would be followed by reprisals. Accordingly, when, in 1867, after the withdrawal of the French forces, Maximilian was at length obliged to surrender to the Republicans, he was tried by court-martial and shot, in retaliation for prisoners whom he or his officers had executed as rebels. The strongest sympathy was felt all through Europe for this unhappy prince, and this became much keener when it was known that his wife, the Empress Charlotte, remained in a state of hopeless insanity. The sad failure of this Mexican enterprise may be considered as the first decided check in the career of success so long pursued by Napoleon the Third.

Meantime a gigantic contest had been slowly preparing between France and Germany. The beginnings of this must be looked for as early as 1866, when the extraordinarily rapid overthrow of the Austrian power by Prussia at the battle of Sadowa, in a war which occupied only seven weeks, left no time for the Emperor to guard against the danger resulting from the union of all Germany with the exception of Austria, into one powerful con-



federacy. This was the more felt because, in the same war, Italy, as the ally of Prussia, had gained the Venetian provinces withheld from her, as already stated, in 1859 ; while in the year 1860, the remarkable landing of 1,000 Garibaldians at Marsala, had in a few days led to the union, first of Sicily, then of Naples, to the Italian monarchy, thus leaving unabsorbed only the Papal States, which Italy had promised to leave unassailed, in consideration of the withdrawal of the French army of occupation. Accordingly it was evident that France could thenceforward exercise no direct influence either in Germany or in Italy ; and this appeared, at that time, in the light of an insupportable grievance. Whether or no the French will ever learn to be content with the natural and powerful influence of their language, manners, and ideas all over the continent of Europe, and whether such a resolve would not be more wholesome for them than a course of perpetual interference in the affairs of other countries, are questions which only time can solve.

Quarrels arose between France and Germany even in 1866 ; and in 1870 the report that the Prince of Hohenzollern, a subject of the King of Prussia, was about to be raised to the vacant throne of Spain, excited an apprehension that German influences might act against France from the south as well as the north. The King of Prussia was remonstrated with, and directed the Prince to withdraw his candidature ; but he declined to give the required assurance that never at any subsequent time should it be renewed. Probably no really skilful statesman would ever have made such a demand as the last ; for kings cannot and do not pledge themselves for *all* future time. In the temper of men's minds at Paris, however, this idea could not gain attention for a moment ; and the Chamber of Deputies, with the exception of M. Thiers, and about six other members, was unanimous in favour of war.

It is most painful to retrace the history of the "terrible

years" 1870 and 1871. We should have to tell how the war administration broke down at every point; how the French were driven back, first from the frontier by the disasters of Worth and Spicheren, then from Metz by the awful battle of Gravelotte; how 170,000 men were cooped up in Metz, and ultimately obliged to capitulate; how Marshal MacMahon was ordered, against his better judgment, to countermarch from Chalons to Sedan, in the vain hope of relieving Metz; how he joined the Emperor, was surrounded by the German force at the bottom of a valley swept on all sides by their guns, and was in his turn obliged to surrender, the Emperor himself going as a prisoner to the German town of Cassel; and how a revolution in Paris drove the Empress to take refuge in England, thus bringing to an end, probably for ever, the hope of a permanent Bonaparte dynasty in France. It would have been well if this had been the end of the calamities. But the conquerors would hear of no terms short of the surrender of Alsace and Lorraine, provinces which had for more than 200 years been part of the French monarchy. Rather than consent to this, France was willing to fill the cup of her sufferings to the brim. Accordingly Paris endured the miseries of four months' siege, till her vast population, after consuming the vilest and most unhealthy food, was at last reduced to surrender, when only one day's provision remained. Shortly after this a civil war raged in and around Paris, under the very eyes of the Germans encamped on the north of the city. The government was now in the hands of M. Thiers, who had been called forward by the very fact of his supreme ability and vast experience. As it was supposed, not without reason, that he desired to restore a monarchy, in the person, probably, of the Count of Paris, his Government, which had its seat at Versailles, was resisted by a large part of the population of Paris, forming what was called the Commune. The rebellion grew fiercer and fiercer as it proceeded; the Versaillese put their prisoners to

death as fast as they took them, and the rebels in turn seized the Archbishop of Paris and a number of priests, and shot them by way of retaliation. Finally, as the Versaillese entered the city after a siege of several weeks, they saw the Tuileries and many other public buildings in a blaze ; they had been set on fire by the desperate rebels in order to cover their flight.

It is bitter to have to write of such things : but let us always remember that truth is above everything, and that whoever suppresses facts because they are disagreeable or discreditable to himself or to a country which he loves, robs history of its honour and usefulness ; since, if so written, it would no longer contain the salutary warnings of old example, by which such miseries may be avoided for the future. Evidently all these horrors might have been avoided if M. Thiers had been listened to when he remonstrated against the war in 1870, instead of being merely called in to heal the calamities which flowed from it. In a moment of excitement war always seems unavoidable ; it appears at such times the height of baseness, even to hint that misunderstandings may be cleared, that patience may show no affront to have been meant, that the question at stake may easily be settled by milder means. If in after life any of us fall on times of like excitement, let us remember that it is precisely then that the coolest and calmest reflection is needed ; that it is not cowardice to long for peace, since a truly brave man should dread war as the greatest of calamities—fearing not mainly the evil he will suffer himself, but that which he may be induced to *do* as the struggle gets fiercer and fiercer.

Such are the lessons of these terrible years, at the end of which France gained peace by the sacrifice of the two provinces and by a crushing payment of £200,000,000. The history of France has been since then mainly a struggle between the partisans of different forms of government. These are, first, the Bonapartists—a small but active party, desiring to place on the

throne the Imperial Prince Louis, who is now an officer in the English army, having studied artillery with distinction at the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich. Other monarchic parties are the Legitimists, who would place upon the throne the Comte de Chambord, the grandson of Charles the Tenth; and the Orleanists who wish for a descendant of Louis Philippe, either his grandson the Count of Paris, or his son the Duc d'Aumale. A fusion or combination between these last parties has now taken place; the Orleanist princes promising not to oppose the Comte de Chambord, but contenting themselves with the succession to the throne after him as his natural heirs. Lastly, there is the Republican party, which has, from the divisions among the monarchists, been able to hold its own in spite of the relative smallness of its numbers. Without attempting to decide on the merits of these respective forms of government, or on their degrees of suitableness for France, we will, in conclusion, state our belief that the Republic could not be in more honourable and patriotic hands than those of Marshal MacMahon, Duke of Magenta, who now administers it as President; and then entreat all our readers to wish and hope most ardently that France, may be what her best and noblest-hearted sons desire—glorious, contented, free alike from oppression and from delusions, and as wise, sober and deliberate as she has always been brave, enthusiastic, and chivalrous.



CHRONOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF THE SUBJECTS OF THIS HISTORY.



FIRST PERIOD.—ROMAN GAUL.



GAUL AND ITS PEOPLE.

B.C. 50 to A.D. 406.

B.C. 50. Conquest of Gaul by Julius Cæsar—Geographical situation of Gaul—The principal rivers of that country—Mountain ranges—Government of the cities of Gaul.

A.D. 150. Introduction of Christianity in Gaul—Savage manners of the Gauls or Celts before their conversion—Barbarous religious rites of the Druids—The use of the Celtic language amongst the people of Gaul.

THE INVASION OF THE BARBARIANS.

A.D. 406 to A.D. 481.

A.D. 406. Successive invasions of the Visigoths—The Burgundians and Franks in the province of Gaul—Their manners and customs—Difference between the Salian and Riparian Franks.

A.D. 413. Settlement of the Visigoths in the southern provinces of the Burgundians in the east of Gaul—Peaceful character of the Visigoths and Burgundians.



SECOND PERIOD.—FRANK GAUL.

MEROVINGIAN DYNASTY. A.D. 481 to A.D. 752.

THE BAPTISM OF CLOVIS.

A.D. 481 to A.D. 511.

State of the provinces of Gaul under the dominion of the Barbarians—Warlike character of the Salian Franks.

A.D. 481 to A.D. 511. Clovis King of Tournai—Distinctive sign of royalty amongst the Salian Franks—Companions in arms of the Frank kings—Leudes or faithful men—Frequent incursions of the Franks in the towns—Clovis occupies Paris—Skill and cunning of Clovis—Institution of Salic lands—Assembly of the Field of Mars.

A.D. 486. Siege of the town of Soissons—Insubordination and punishment of a Frank soldier.

A.D. 493. Marriage of Clovis with Clotilde of Burgundy.

A.D. 496. Invasion of the Germans beyond the Rhine—Battle of Tolbiac—Clovis' vows—Baptism of Clovis—His conquests in Gaul.

A.D. 507. Battle of Vouglé—Origin of the name of Merovings or Merovingians, given to the French kings of the first dynasty.

CLODOMIR'S CHILDREN.

A.D. 511 to A.D. 534.

A.D. 511 to A.D. 561. The sons of Clovis—Clovis's kingdom divided between his four sons.

A.D. 524. Death of Clodomir—Ferocious and ambitious character of Childebert the First, and Clotaire the First.

A.D. 526. Shocking murder of Clodomir's two eldest sons—Foundation of the Monastery of Saint Clodoald, or Saint Cloud, upon the borders of the Seine.

CLOTAIRE'S REPENTANCE.

A.D. 534 to A.D. 561.

A.D. 534. New conquests of the sons of Clovis in the provinces of Gaul.

A.D. 542. Total expulsion of the Visigoths and destruction of the first kingdom of Burgundy—New manners adopted by the Frank kings.

- A.D. 555. Quarrels between Clotaire and Childebert.
- A.D. 558. Death of Childebert.
- A.D. 558 to A.D. 561. Clotaire the First unites under one head all the Frank Monarchies.
- A.D. 560. Revolt of Chramnes—Terrible punishment inflicted by Clotaire upon his rebellious son.
- A.D. 561. Remorse and miserable end of Clotaire the First.

THE AUSTRASIAN FRANKS.

A.D. 561 to A.D. 575.

- A.D. 561 to A.D. 628. The sons of Clotaire the First—Second division of the Frank kingdoms between the sons of Clotaire the First—Kingdoms of Neustria, Austrasia, and Burgundy—Limits and extent of Austrasia and Neustria.
- A.D. 566. Marriage of Sigebert with Brunehaut, and of Chilperic the First with Galsuintha—Obscure birth and remarkable beauty of Fredegonda—Sudden death of Galsuintha—Chilperic marries Fredegonda—Intestine wars between the Frank kings.
- A.D. 575. Murder of Sigebert—Hatred existing between Fredegonda and Brunehaut—Captivity of Brunehaut and her son—Childebert the Second in the town of Rouen.

QUEEN FREDEGONDA.

A.D. 575 to A.D. 584.

- Childebert the Second saved by his father's Leudes—Institution of the *Mayors* of the Palace.
- A.D. 576. Secret marriage of Brunehaut to Meroveus, Chilperic's son—Fredegonda's indignation—Origin of the monasteries of Gaul.
- A.D. 577. Murders of Pretextatus and Meroveus—Sudden death of Fredegonda's children—Barbarous accusation of sorcery brought by that princess against her enemies.
- A.D. 584. Murder of Chilperic the First by Landri.

THE DEATH OF BRUNEHAUT.

A.D. 584 to A.D. 613.

- A.D. 584. Accession of Clotaire the Second, under the guardianship of his uncle, Gontran, King of Burgundy—Singular request made by this King to the Franks—Exile of Fredegonda and her repeated crimes.
- A.D. 596. Death of Childebert the Second—The Austrasian Franks dispute the possession of the kingdom of Burgundy with the Neustrians.
- A.D. 597. Death of Fredegonda—Infamy of Clotaire the Second—Brunehaut's crimes in her own family.

A.D. 613. Varnachairius's treachery towards the ~~Princess~~.—Frightful punishment inflicted on Brunehaut by order of Clotaire the ~~Second~~.

THE MONASTERIES.

A.D. 613 to A.D. 638.

A.D. 613. Clotaire the Second ~~unites the Frank~~ monarchy under one head.

A.D. 622. His son Dagobert crowned ~~King of~~ Austrasia.

A.D. 628 to A.D. 638. Dagobert the First, ~~King~~ of the whole of Gaul—~~Remarkable changes~~ in the manners of the Franks since the conquest—Creation of royal ~~officers under~~ the title of Dukes and Counts—Origin and institution of benefices—~~Progress of~~ the authority of the mayors of the palace in Burgundy and Austrasia—~~Pepin the Old~~ exercises great power amongst the Austrasians.

A.D. 632. Division of the kingdom of Dagobert the First between his sons, Sigebert the ~~Second~~ and Clovis the Second—Saint Eligius, goldsmith and treasurer to Dagobert the First—Use of the Monks, and the good service they rendered to society—Construction of the vaults of Saint Denis, intended by Dagobert to be the graves of the kings of his race—Foundation of a great number of monasteries.

THE INDOLENT KINGS.

A.D. 638 to A.D. 656.

A.D. 638 to A.D. 752. The Indolent Kings—Sigebert the Second and Clovis the Second were the first of the so-called Indolent Kings—Progress of the power of the Mayors of the Palace—Pepin the Old in Austrasia and Ebröin in Neustria.

A.D. 650. Death of Sigebert—Indolence of Clovis the Second—~~History of~~ Queen Bathilda.

A.D. 656. Premature death of Clovis the Second.

THE MAYORS OF THE PALACE.

A.D. 656 to A.D. 678.

A.D. 656. Accession of the sons of Clovis the Second, Clotaire the Third in Neustria, and Childeric the Second in Austrasia—Foundation of the Abbey of Chelles.

A.D. 660. Power and ambition of Ebröin, Mayor of the Palace of Neustria.

A.D. 670. Death of Clotaire the Third—Thierry the Third raised to the throne of Neustria by Ebröin—Revolt of the Austrasian chiefs against the young King, who retired to the Abbey of Saint Denis.

A.D. 671. Childeric the Second unites for a short time the whole of Frank Gaul—Elevation and disgrace of Saint Léger.

A.D. 673. Murder of Childeric the Second and his family by Bodilo—Re-establishment of Thierry the Third upon the throne.

A.D. 676. Implacable hatred shown by Ebrûin to Saint Léger.

A.D. 678. Saint Léger's martyrdom—Rapid decay of the Merovingian race.

PEPIN D'HERISTAL.

A.D. 679 to A.D. 691.

Illustrious origin of Pepin d'Heristal.

A.D. 679. Violent death of Dagobert the Second, last King of Austrasia—Abolition of royalty amongst the Austrasians.

A.D. 679 to A.D. 714. Pepin receives the title of Duke of Austrasia.

A.D. 687. Battle of Testry, near Peronne—Defeat and flight—Remarkable results of the battle of Testry—Power and greatness of Pepin d'Heristal—His victories over the Frisians, the Swabians, and the Bavarians.

A.D. 691. Death of Thierry the Third.

DEFEAT OF THE SARACENS.

A.D. 691 to A.D. 741.

Geographical position of the principal German tribes between the Elbe and the Rhine.

A.D. 691. Obscure reign of Thierry's sons, Clovis the Third and Childbert the Third.

A.D. 711. Dagobert the Third raised to the throne of Neustria.

A.D. 714. Death of Pepin d'Heristal at an advanced age.

A.D. 715. Charles Martel, son of Pepin—Meaning of the name of Martel—The Neustrians rebel against the rule of Plectrude, widow of Pepin d'Heristal—Defeat of the Austrasians under the walls of Metz—Rainfroy raised to the dignity of Mayor of the Palace—Charles Martel restored to liberty, and proclaimed Duke of Austrasia.

A.D. 717. Defeat of Rainfroy and the Neustrians—Generosity shown by Charles to his step-mother Plectrude.

A.D. 719. Charles Martel proclaimed Mayor of the Palace of Neustria—Origin of the Saracens—Invasions of the Saracens over the Pyrenees—Defeat of Eudes, Duke of Aquitaine.

A.D. 732. Victory gained at Poitiers by Charles Martel over the Saracens—Memorable consequences of the battle of Poitiers—Death of Dagobert the Third—Chilperic the Third raised to the throne of Neustria by Charles Martel.

A.D. 741. Death of that great man.

A.D. 741 to A.D. 747. Pepin and Carloman, his sons, succeed him as Mayors of the Palace of Neustria and Austrasia.

PEPIN THE LITTLE.

A.D. 741 to A.D. 768.

Story of the remarkable courage shown by Pepin the Little.

A.D. 742. Childeric the Third, last king of the Merovingian dynasty—Carloman's victories over the German people.

A.D. 747. Carloman renounces the world and retires to a monastery.

A.D. 747 to A.D. 752. Pepin the Little sole Mayor of the Monarchy—Missionaries sent to Germany by the Popes to convert the barbarous natives—Friendly relations between the Dukes of Austrasia and the Roman Pontiffs.

A.D. 752. Favourable answer given by Pope Zachary to a request from Pepin—Childeric the Third is shaved and shut up in a cloister.

CARLOVINGIAN DYNASTY. A.D. 752 to A.D. 987.

A.D. 752 to A.D. 768. Pepin the Little proclaimed King of the Franks by the assembly at Soissons—His coronation by Saint Boniface.

A.D. 754. Pope Stephen the Second comes to France to entreat Pepin to help him against the Lombards—Pepin is crowned again by Pope Stephen the Second—Also the two sons of Carloman.

A.D. 755. Victories gained by Pepin over the Lombards in Italy—Origin of Saint Peter's patrimony.

A.D. 757. Magnificent presents sent to Pepin by the Emperor of the East.

A.D. 768. Death of Pepin the Little.

CHARLEMAGNE.

A.D. 768 to A.D. 814.

A.D. 768 to A.D. 814. Charlemagne—Eminent qualities and personal advantages of Charlemagne—Dangerous position of Frank Gaul at Charlemagne's accession—Power of Witikind, Duke of the Saxons.

A.D. 755. Murder of Saint Boniface by the Barbarians—Apostolic bravery of the Christian missionaries.

A.D. 772 to A.D. 804. Charlemagne's long and sanguinary wars against the Saxons—Foundation of Aix-la-Chapelle, which he made his capital.

A.D. 774. Charlemagne's victories over the Lombards, and conquest of the kingdom of Lombardy.

A.D. 778. Charlemagne's conquests in Spain—Vast extent of Charlemagne's empire.

A.D. 800. Pope Leo the Third proclaims him Emperor of the West—Publication of the Capitularies—Charlemagne's laborious life—Institution of an academy at Aix-la-Chapelle—Universal glory of Charlemagne.

A.D. 801. Presents sent to him by the Caliph of Bagdad, Haroun al Raschid.

A.D. 814. Death and burial of Charlemagne at Aix-la-Chapelle—Meaning of the name Karoling, or Carlovingian, which was given to the princes of Charlemagne's family.

THE VALLEY OF RONCEVALLES.

A.D. 778.

Charlemagne's knights; their courtesy and exploits—Valour of the Paladin Roland—Ambuscade in the valley of Roncevalles—Glorious resistance made by Roland, and his death—Roland's tomb in the Pyrenees—Warlike ballad composed in his honour, and repeated for many years by the Frank soldiers.

LOUIS LE DEBONNAIRE.

A.D. 814 to A.D. 843.

A.D. 814 to A.D. 840. Louis the First (le Débonnaire) Emperor of the West.

A.D. 816. Consecrated at Rheims by Pope Stephen the Fourth.

A.D. 817. Revolt of Bernard, King of Italy, against this prince—Terrible punishment inflicted by Louis le Débonnaire on his nephew.

A.D. 818. Death of Bernard.

A.D. 822. Remorse and public penance of Louis le Débonnaire at Altigny—Nations of various origin submit themselves to the Empire of Charlemagne.

A.D. 823. Louis le Débonnaire associates his son Lothaire in the Empire.

A.D. 833. Louis of Bavaria and Pepin of Aquitaine revolt against their father—Lothaire's odious ingratitude in the "Field of Falsehood"—Separation of the different peoples composing the Empire of Charlemagne—Louis le Débonnaire abandoned and imprisoned—His public degradation at Soissons.

A.D. 834. Louis is restored to liberty through the pity of his subjects—Louis marries, secondly, Judith of Bavaria.

A.D. 838. Provinces given to Charles, his son, by Louis as his inheritance.

A.D. 840. Louis retreats into an island on the Rhine—Appearance of a comet—Miserable end of Louis le Débonnaire—Quarrels between his sons.

A.D. 841. Battle of Fontenay.

A.D. 843. Treaty of Verdun—Final division of the Empire of the Franks between the Emperor Lothaire, Louis the German, and Charles the Bald.

THE STRONG CASTLES.

A.D. 843 to A.D. 877.

A.D. 840 to A.D. 877. Charles the Second, surnamed the Bald.

A.D. 843. First appearance of the Normans on the coast of Gaul—Changes in the manners of the Frank people—Origin and construction of fortified castles—Ferocious character of the Frank lords.

A.D. 864. Charles the Bald issues a capitulary which forbids the building of any more strong castles—Hereditary right of the royal offices taken from Charles the Bald by the Frank dukes and counts—Power and courage of Robert the Strong, Count of Paris and Anjou.

A.D. 866. Death of Robert the Strong—Devastations and sacrileges committed by the Normans in many provinces of France.

A.D. 877. End of Charles's reign.

THE SIEGE OF PARIS.

A.D. 877 to A.D. 888.

A.D. 877 to A.D. 879. Louis the Second, the Stammerer—His premature death.

A.D. 879. Louis the Third and Carloman, his sons, succeed him—Touching affection between these two princes—The Normans continue their ravages.

A.D. 882. Unexpected death of Louis the Third.

A.D. 884. Death of Carloman while hunting.

A.D. 884. Charles the Fat takes the title of Emperor of the West—Contemptible character of this Prince.

A.D. 885. Siege of Paris by the Normans—Obstinate defence made by Count Eude, eldest son of Robert the Strong.

A.D. 887. Shameful cowardice of Charles the Fat—Indignation of the Frank lords—Deposition of Charles the Fat.

A.D. 888. His death—End of the second Western Empire—Kingdoms of Europe formed from the wreck of Charlemagne's Empire.

THE FEUDAL SYSTEM.

A.D. 888 to A.D. 923.

Rise of the Feudal System—Protection granted by the lords to the peasants against the ravages of the Normans—The name of Serf given to the country people—Origin of feudal obedience—Duties of vassals towards their suzerains—Duties of suzerains towards their vassals—Institution of Liegemen—Establish-

ment of Fiefs—Miserable condition of the people under the Feudal System—Cruelty exercised by the lords towards their vassals—Strange obligations which sometimes bound the vassals to their lords.

A.D. 888 to A.D. 898. Eudes is raised to the throne on the death of Charles the Fat.

A.D. 893 to A.D. 923. Charles the Simple is proclaimed King of France by the discontented lords.

A.D. 912. The surrender of Maritime Neustria to Rollo, Duke of the Normans, who gives the province the name of Normandy—Ceremony of homage rendered by Duke Rollo to Charles the Third.

A.D. 920. Misfortunes and imprisonment of Charles the Simple.

A.D. 922 to A.D. 923. Robert the First consecrated at Rheims, and killed in the following year.

A.D. 923. Death of Charles the Third in the Castle of Peronne.

THE LAST OF THE KAROLINGS.

A.D. 923 to A.D. 987.

The name of France now used instead of that of Gaul in history—Formation of the French nation—Romance languages formed by the mixture of Latin and Teutonic. Celtic language preserved in some of the French provinces—Different languages spoken by the princes, bishops, and French lords.

A.D. 923 to A.D. 936. Raoul, Duke of Burgundy, succeeded Robert the First—Power and greatness of Hugh the White, Count of Paris.

A.D. 936 to A.D. 954. Louis the Fourth (d'Outre Mer) called to the throne on the death of King Raoul—His ingratitude towards Hugh the White.

A.D. 940. New dissensions in the kingdom.

A.D. 954. Accidental death of Louis d'Outre Mer.

A.D. 954 to A.D. 986. Lothaire the Second, son of Louis the Fourth—Hugh the White has him consecrated at Rheims.

A.D. 956. Death of Hugh the White—His son, Hugh Capet, succeeds him as Count of Paris and Duke of France.

A.D. 978. Charles of France abandons his brother and withdraws to the court of Otho, King of Germany—Invasion of King Otho—Defeat of the Germans on the banks of the Aisne.

A.D. 986. Death of King Lothaire.

A.D. 986. Louis the Fifth, the Indolent, succeeds him—End of the Carolingian Dynasty.

THIRD PERIOD.—THE FRENCH NATION.

CAPETIAN DYNASTY. A.D. 987 to A.D. 1789.

FIRST BRANCH OF DIRECT CAPETIAN. A.D. 987 to A.D. 1328.

EXCOMMUNICATION.

A.D. 987 to A.D. 1031.

A.D. 987 to A.D. 996. Hugh Capet raised to the throne of France—Commencement of the Capetian Dynasty—Extension of the kingdom of France under Hugh Capet.

A.D. 988. Vain efforts of Prince Charles to take away the crown—Miserable end of this Prince—Origin of the House of Lorraine—Hugh Capet has his son Robert consecrated.

A.D. 996. Death of Hugh Capet.

A.D. 996 to A.D. 1031. Robert the Second—His marriage with Bertha of Burgundy.

A.D. 998. The young pair are excommunicated—Terrible effects of the interdict pronounced against the kingdom of France—Robert is at last obliged to divorce his wife.

A.D. 1031. Robert's good and religious life, and his funeral.

GOD'S TRUCE.

A.D. 1031 to A.D. 1060.

A.D. 1031 to A.D. 1060. Henry the First—Ferocious manners of the French lords in the 11th century.

A.D. 1041. The bishops try to establish the Peace of God—The lords consent to this and swear to observe it—Henry the First refuses to submit to it—Institution of Chivalry—Ceremonies on the reception of a knight.

A.D. 1060. Philip consecrated at Rheims in the lifetime of his father.

THE FIRST CRUSADE.

A.D. 1060 to A.D. 1108.

A.D. 1060 to A.D. 1108. Philip the First—The first Christian pilgrimages in the 11th century—The pilgrims cruelly treated by the Saracens who went to Jerusalem.

A.D. 1095. Appearance of Peter the Hermit—His efforts to obtain Pope Urban's sanction for the deliverance of the Holy Sepulchre—Departure of the first Crusade—Sad fate of the first Crusaders.

A.D. 1099. Godefroi de Bouillon takes possession of Jerusalem—Return of the Crusaders—Minstrels and jugglers in Europe—Origin of a popular proverb.

A.D. 1108. End of the reign of Philip the First.

THE ENFRANCHISEMENT OF THE COMMONS.

A.D. 1108 to A.D. 1137.

A.D. 1108 to A.D. 1137. Louis the Sixth, the Fat—Eminent qualities of this Prince—His contests with the great vassals of the Crown.

A.D. 1119. War between Louis the Sixth and William the Conqueror—Battle of Brenneville—Rapid increase of the population of the cities under the first Capetians—First attempt of the Burgesses to free the Commons—Royal Charters granted by Louis the Sixth to many towns—Origin of the Burgesses.

THE PARLIAMENT.

A.D. 1137 to A.D. 1180.

A.D. 1137 to A.D. 1180. Louis the Seventh (the Young)—First national assembly of the Franks after the conquest—Field of Mars renewed by Charlemagne—Assembly of the barons of the Duchy of France under Louis the Seventh—Establishment of the King's court and parliament—Progress of the royal power in the south of France—The country of Langue d'oc, and Langue d'oïl.

A.D. 1143. War against the Count of Champagne—Burning of Vitry—Remorse and penance of Louis the Young.

A.D. 1147. Saint Bernard preaches the Second Crusade—Administration of the Abbot Suger—Oriflamme.

A.D. 1149. The success of the crusade.

A.D. 1152. Louis the Seventh divorces Eleanor of Aquitaine.

A.D. 1160. Second marriage of the King.

A.D. 1165. Birth of Philip Augustus—Infancy and good qualities of the young prince.

THE BATTLE OF BOUVINES.

A.D. 1180 to A.D. 1214.

A.D. 1180 to A.D. 1223. Philip Augustus.

A.D. 1190. Third Crusade—Close friendship between Philip Augustus and Richard Cœur de Lion—Siege of St. Jean d'Acre—Disunion of the two monarchs.

A.D. 1191. Return of Philip Augustus to France.

A.D. 1199. Death of Richard.

A.D. 1203. Murder of Arthur of Brittany by John Lackland (of England)—The King of England summoned to appear before the Peers of France—Confiscation of Normandy.

A.D. 1213. Formidable coalition against Philip Augustus by John Lackland, the Emperor Otho, the Count of Flanders.

A.D. 1214. Bouvines—Valour of Philip Augustus and the French army—Flight of the Emperor Otho—Captivity of the Count of Flanders—Foundation of a church by a serjeant-at-arms, to commemorate the victory of Bouvines—Improvement of Paris by Philip Augustus—Building of the tower of the Louvre—Encouragement given to the schools at Paris.

THE ALBIGENSES.

A.D. 1208 to A.D. 1226.

Prosperity of the Southern Provinces in the 13th century—First attempts at religious reform in the town of Albi—Rapid progress of heresy in Languedoc.

A.D. 1208. Raymond the Sixth excommunicated—Murder of Peter of Castelnau—A crusade preached against the Albigenses.

A.D. 1209. Massacre of Béziers—Siege of Carcassonne—Roger Raymond's devotion to his people—Languedoc devastated by the crusaders.

A.D. 1215. Simon de Montfort made Count of Toulouse by the Pope—Obstinate resistance of the Albigenses.

A.D. 1223 to A.D. 1226. Louis the Eighth.

A.D. 1226. Amaury de Montfort gives up Languedoc to Louis the Eighth, King of France.

THE REIGN OF SAINT LOUIS.

A.D. 1226 to A.D. 1270.

A.D. 1226 to A.D. 1270. Louis the Ninth (Saint Louis)—Regency of Blanche of Castille—Description of the young King—The Oak of Vincennes—Institution of the Hospital of Quinze Vingts.

A.D. 1242. Battle of Taillebourg—Valour of Saint Louis—Dangerous illness of the King—His vow to undertake a new crusade.

A.D. 1248. Expedition of Louis the Ninth in Egypt.

A.D. 1250. Battle of Masourah—Captivity of Saint Louis—His patience in adversity.

A.D. 1254. His courage during a storm—Publication of the Laws of Saint Louis—Abolition of judicial combats—Creation of the royal bailiffs and origin of the gentlemen of the long robe—Severity of Louis' laws against blasphemers.

A.D. 1270. New Crusade in Africa—The plague breaks out in the French camp—The King's charity—Last moments of Saint Louis—His death and funeral.

MARIE OF BRABANT.

A.D. 1270 to A.D. 1278.

A. D. 1270 to A.D. 1285. Philip the Bold—His marriage with Marie of Brabant—Pierre Labrosse gained an ascendancy over the King—Death of Philip's eldest son—False accusation brought against Marie—The Queen saved from death by her

brother, the Duke of Brabant—Fame of the Beguine of Nivelles—Her reply to the King's messengers—Marie of Brabant's justification—Discovery of Peter Labrosse's treason.

A.D. 1278. Ignominious death of this minister.

THE SICILIAN VESPER.

A.D. 1278 to A.D. 1285.

Conquest of Sicily by Charles of Anjou under Louis the Ninth—Arrogant conduct of the French towards the Sicilians—Hatred of John of Procida to the conquerors.

A.D. 1282. A young girl insulted by a French soldier in the streets of Palermo—The massacre known as the Sicilian Vespers—Philip the Bold prepares to avenge this massacre.

A.D. 1285. Death of the King.

THE TEMPLARS.

A.D. 1285 to A.D. 1314.

A.D. 1285 to A.D. 1314. Philip the Fourth (the Fair)—Philip's eminent qualities—Origin of the Knights of the Temple—Riches and glory acquired by the exploits of this military order—The royal treasury empty—Introduction into France of the Italian bankers known by the name of Lombards—Philip the Fourth received the surname of False Money-Maker.

A.D. 1307. Terrible accusation brought by Philip against the Templars—Torture employed to wring confessions from the Templars.

A.D. 1314. Condemnation of Jaques de Molay and the principal Knights Templars, to suffer death by burning—Prophetic words said to have been uttered by the Grand Master when dying at the stake—Death of Philip the Fair.

ENGUERRAND DE MARIGNY.

A.D. 1314 to A.D. 1316.

A.D. 1314 to A.D. 1316. Louis the Tenth (Le Hutin)—The public treasury exhausted—Enguerrand de Marigny accused of having appropriated the wealth of the crown—Charles de Valois hates Marigny—Illness of Louis the Tenth attributed to the sorcery of the Dame de Marigny.

A.D. 1315. Enguerrand hanged at Montfaucon—Louis the Tenth sells the liberty of the serfs—Exactions committed on the Lombards and other foreign merchants.

A.D. 1316.—Death of Louis—Remorse of the Count de Valois.

THE SHEPHERDS.

A.D. 1316 to A.D. 1328.

A.D. 1316. John the First dies five days after his birth—Louis le Hutin leaves no sons—First interpretation of the Salic law, which excludes women from the throne of France.

A.D. 1316 to A.D. 1322. Philip the Fifth (the Tall), brother of Louis le Hutin.

A.D. 1320. Insurrection of the "Shepherds"—Their ravages in France as far as Paris—Horrible persecutions of the Jews—Extermination of the Shepherds in the plains of Languedoc—Poverty of the royal treasury.

A.D. 1321. Exactions from the Lepers—False accusations of poisoning brought against them—Massacre of both Jews and Lepers.

A.D. 1322. Premature death of Philip the Tall.

A.D. 1322 to A.D. 1328. Charles the Fourth (the Fair), his brother, succeeds.

A.D. 1328. Death of Charles the Fair, and second interpretation of the Salic law in favour of Philip de Valois.

SECOND BRANCH OF CAPETIAN DYNASTY.—THE VALOIS. A.D. 1328 to
A.D. 1589.

DIRECT LINE. A.D. 1328 to A.D. 1498.

THE FIRST OF THE VALOIS.

A.D. 1328 to A.D. 1347

A.D. 1328 to A.D. 1350. Philip the Sixth—Progress of Royalty—Cause of the rivalry between France and England.

A.D. 1329. Edward the Third does homage to Philip for his Duchy of Aquitaine—Ceremonies observed on this occasion—Unfriendly feeling shown by Edward towards Philip de Valois.

A.D. 1340. Origin of the Hundred Years War—Naval battle of L'Ecluse.

A.D. 1346. Landing of the King of England in Normandy—Battle of Crécy—Impetuosity of the French—The Black Prince's courage—First use of fire-arms in a pitched battle—Total defeat of the French army—Immense loss sustained by the French—Flight of Philip de Valois.

A.D. 1347. Siege and capture of Calais by the English.

THE BLACK DEATH.

A.D. 1347 to A.D. 1350.

A.D. 1348. The Black Death breaks out in Europe—Its ravages in Languedoc and other French provinces—Terrible effects of the epidemic—Superstitious terror and blasphemy of the people—Punishment inflicted upon the blasphemers—Massacre of the Jews—The city of Paris devastated by the plague—Truce for seven years concluded between the Kings of France and England.

A.D. 1350. Death of Philip de Valois.

THE BATTLE OF THE THIRTY.

A.D. 1350 to A.D. 1356.

A.D. 1350 to A.D. 1364. John surnamed the Good—Disastrous reign of this prince.

A.D. 1351. Hostilities between the English and French barons during the truce—Robert de Beaumanoir and thirty Breton knights challenged in single combat the same number of English knights—Fight of the thirty near Ploërmel—Intrepidity of the combatants—Complete victory of the French—Odious character of Charles the Bad—His jealousy of the Constable de la Cerda.

A.D. 1354. Murder of the constable by the Navarrese—Banishment of Charles the Bad. (A.D. 1343. Dauphiny united to France—The title of Dauphin)—Good qualities of the Dauphin.

A.D. 1356. Fête given by the Dauphin to Charles the Bad in Normandy—His imprisonment by John in the Louvre.

KING JOHN'S CAPTIVITY.

A.D. 1355 to A.D. 1356.

A.D. 1355. Expiration of the truce concluded with the English by Philip the Sixth—Convocation of the States-General at Paris—Origin and composition of these States under the house of Valois—Object of these assemblies—"Right of purveyance" exercised by the King's officers on his journeys—Complaints of the States General.

A.D. 1356. King John marches to meet the Black Prince—Battle of Poitiers—Imprudence and total defeat of the French men-at-arms—Captivity of the King and of his son—Noble conduct of the Black Prince towards his prisoner—Desperate situation of the kingdom after the battle of Poitiers.

STEPHEN MARCEL.

A.D. 1356 to A.D. 1364.

A.D. 1356. The Dauphin is invested with the regency of the kingdom—Fresh convocation of the States-General at Paris and Toulouse—Conduct of Robert Lecoq and Stephen Marcel at the States-General—Wise administration of Marcel in the city of Paris.

A.D. 1358. Evasive replies of the prince—Deliverance of Charles the Bad—Officers of the Dauphin murdered before his eyes at the Hôtel de Ville—Sign of rallying used by Paris burgesses in troublous times—Deplorable influence of the King of Navarre over the people—Secret flight of the Dauphin to Champagne—The Dauphin approaches the capital at the head of a large army—Murder of Stephen Marcel by the Sheriff, John Maillard—Return of the Dauphin.

A.D. 1360. Disastrous treaty of Bretigny—King John's captivity comes to an end.

A.D. 1364. His death in London—Miserable death of Charles the Bad.

THE CONSTABLE DU GUESCLIN.

A.D. 1364 to A.D. 1380.

A.D. 1364 to A.D. 1380. Charles the Fifth, surnamed the Wise—Birth and early years of Bertrand du Guesclin—His ugliness, and his good qualities—Remarkable prophecy made to his mother by a nun—Celebration of a tournament in Brittany—Du Guesclin's glorious deeds of arms against the English.

A.D. 1370. His elevation to the dignity of constable of France by Charles the Fifth—Ravages committed by the companies of adventurers in the kingdom—Du Guesclin leads the great companies into Spain—Goodness and humanity of the Constable.

A.D. 1380. His illness at the siege of the Castle of Randon—His last words to his companions in arms—Homage rendered to the memory of the Constable by the governor of Randon—The remains of Du Guesclin borne to Saint Denis—Death of Charles the Wise—Foundation of the royal library at Paris, attributed to this Prince.

THE MADNESS OF CHARLES THE FIFTH.

A.D. 1380 to A.D. 1422.

A.D. 1380 to A.D. 1422. Charles the Sixth—Disastrous reigns of the princes of the house of Valois—Accession and minority of Charles the Sixth—His feeble mind and bad education.

A.D. 1392. An unforeseen accident develops the insanity of the King—The means used for his recovery prove useless—Apparent return to reason—Accident

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